

THE FORMULATION OF BRITAIN'S
POLICY TOWARDS EGYPT: 1922-1925

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ABSTRACT

The years immediately following the First World War were extremely important for the formulation of Britain's policy towards Egypt, a British Protectorate since 1914. In this connection, the years 1922 to 1925, the last years of Lord Allenby's tenure as Britain's High Commissioner in Egypt, were critical.

Allenby, who was appointed in 1919 in order to suppress nationalist-inspired rioting in Egypt, adopted a surprising policy of moderation. He soon forced the British government to unilaterally declare Egypt's independence in 1922. This apparent success was followed by the adoption of a modern constitution in Egypt and the British withdrawal from the entanglements of Egypt's administration. Still Allenby's career ended in seeming frustration in 1925: negotiations between Britain and Egypt failed in 1924, to be followed by the assassination of the British Governor General of the Sudan, Sir Lee Stack, and Allenby's harsh ultimatum to the Egyptian government in November 1924 effectively reinstituting British control of Egypt's administration. Allenby left Egypt in 1925 because of his sharp response to the disorders and his refusal, as in 1922, to accept the views of the British government in London. This rivalry between British policy-makers in Cairo and in London became the hallmark of British policy throughout this period.

The thesis attempts to answer some of the questions raised by the formulation of Britain's policy towards Egypt during the years 1922-1925, when an effort was made to regularise Anglo-Egyptian relations. Towards this end, there is an examination of the factors affecting Britain's policy in three related areas: the environment - the approaches and perceptions of policy; the balance and tensions between the High Commissioner and his Residency staff in Cairo and the British government in London; and, finally, the interaction of these elements with events in Egypt, particularly the struggle between the nationalist forces, led by Zaghlul Pasha, and the Egyptian King, Ahmad Fuad.

PREFACE

Before entering the main body of the thesis, I would like to explain several technical aspects of approach and to thank the many institutions and individuals who were so generous in their assistance:

SOURCES. The primary sources that have been used for this work are the various public and private papers collections available in Britain, the contemporary press and memoirs written by participants or observers. Emphasis has been placed on these sources because the work is an attempt to explain the perceptions, mechanics and results of British policy formulation towards Egypt from 1922 to 1925. For this reason Arabic sources were not used extensively.

TRANSLITERATION. Standard Arabic transliteration has been used. However, diacritical marks were omitted. Common words or place names, such as Khedive or Cairo, were used in their accepted English forms.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS. The preparation of this thesis has been facilitated by several institutions and individuals to whom I am deeply indebted.

I would like to give my thanks to the officers and the staff of the following institutions for permitting me access to research materials and so generously assisting me during the initial stages of the research: Beaverbrook Library, London; Birmingham University Library; Bodleian Library; British Museum; Colonial Records Project, Oxford; Cambridge University Library; Pembroke College Library, Cambridge; Public Records Office; School of Oriental and African Studies Library; St. Antony's College; State Archives, Israel; Sudan Archives, Durham University. I would particularly like to thank Lord Allenby for his generous hospitality while I was a guest in his home in Kent working on the papers of the late Viscount Allenby.

During my research and then the writing of the thesis I was assisted by generous grants from the University Grants Committee, the University of London, and Carleton University's Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research.

Many individuals have given kind assistance throughout the preparation

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Finally, I wish to express my deep gratitude to Professor P.M. Holt, of the School of Oriental and African Studies, who supervised this work. His insight and comments during my stay in London were invaluable. His patience during the long period of gestation much appreciated.

No acknowledgement would be complete without my thanks to my wife, Norma Rothman, who commented, cajoled, typed and proofread the thesis. Her assistance was always given in great measure and with good cheer.

E.R.

Ottawa, 1979

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations were used in references to public and private papers:

<u>add</u> :	additional manuscripts
<u>BLL</u> :	Beaverbrook Library, London
<u>BLO</u> :	Bodleian Library, Oxford
<u>BM</u> :	British Museum
<u>BUL</u> :	Birmingham University Library
<u>C</u> :	Command Paper
<u>CAB</u> :	Cabinet
<u>Cd</u> :	Command Paper
<u>CID</u> :	Committee of Imperial Defence
<u>Cmd</u> :	Command Paper
<u>CP</u> :	Cabinet Paper
<u>CRPO</u> :	Colonial Records Project, Oxford
<u>CUL</u> :	Cambridge University Library
<u>DNB</u> :	Dictionary of National Biography
<u>FO</u> :	Foreign Office
<u>IND</u> :	Index
<u>KAP</u> :	Kent Allenby Papers
<u>PCL</u> :	Pembroke College Library
<u>PRO</u> :	Public Records Office
<u>SAD</u> :	Sudan Archives, Durham University
<u>SAI</u> :	State Archives, Israel
<u>STAC</u> :	St. Antony's College, Oxford

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	i
PREFACE	ii
ABBREVIATIONS	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
PART ONE: THE ENVIRONMENT OF POLICY	
Chapter	
I. THE EMERGENCE OF CAIRO	10
II. LONDON - THE PRE-OCCUPIED CENTRE	29
III. SHARED PERCEPTIONS - THE MOTIFS OF POLICY	53
PART TWO: CAIRO'S YEARS, 1922-1923	
IV. THE FAILURE OF NEGOTIATIONS	72
V. INDEPENDENCE	98
VI. THE NEW APPROACH - DISENGAGEMENT AND RESTRICTION	127
VII. THE STRUGGLE FOR DISENGAGEMENT	144
PART THREE: LONDON'S YEARS, 1924-1925	
VIII. 'GREAT EXPECTATIONS' - MACDONALD AND ZAGHLUL	187
IX. THE NEGOTIATIONS	220
X. ALLENBY'S DECLINE	238
CONCLUSION	271
BIBLIOGRAPHY	277

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

'Renounce - or monopolize - or share'¹: These words, written by Lord Salisbury one year before the British occupation of Egypt in 1883, sharply defined the central dilemma of British policy towards Egypt. It was a dilemma that would concern British statesmen and diplomatists for nearly three-quarters of a century and would be resolved only by the final withdrawal of Britain's troops from Egypt in 1954.

The dilemma was indeed fascinating. The renunciation of control over Egypt would prevent Britain from becoming and then remaining entangled in Egyptian affairs and hostage to the variable fortunes of international diplomacy. Yet such a step might hazard British strategic and economic interests in the area. The monopolization of control would, it was believed, assure British interests, but might invite the dangers of foreign entanglements. The sharing of control could conceivably involve Britain - whether in Europe or in Egypt - in the entanglements hitherto avoided, while not really assuring the maintenance of vital interests.

If this dilemma was central at the start of Britain's occupation of Egypt in 1883, it was equally important in the years following the First World War. A period of great complexity and sharp changes, this was a time in which Britain's leaders were forced, often much to their dismay, to reassess that country's imperial role and its relations with diverse sections of the Empire. The forces unleashed by the events, policies and pronouncements of the war years affected areas as distant and dissimilar as India and Ireland. Egypt, declared a Protectorate by Britain in 1914, did not remain untouched by the changes that followed once the discipline imposed by wartime needs and pressures had relaxed. It was at this point that Salisbury's dilemma - 'renounce - or monopolize - or share' - again became the focus of British policy.

European interest, generally, and British involvement in Egypt, specifically,

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1. Salisbury to Sir Stafford Northcote, September 16, 1881, in Lady Gwendolen Cecil, The Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury (London, 1921), II, 331-2. Sections of the foregoing historical summary are based on the writer's Master's Thesis: Eugene Rothman, The Formulation of Britain's Policy Towards Egypt, 1882-1887 (Columbia University, 1968).

were the result of a variety of considerations. One writer noted that there were four basic factors underlying European imperialism in the late nineteenth century: economic interests; strategy and defence; national prestige; and, the movement of populations.¹ In the case of Britain and Egypt, economic and political-strategic considerations were paramount and inter-related, providing the basis for policy.

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, British interest in Egypt was only occasional. But a few Englishmen lived there throughout the period and they left little mark on the country. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 signalled a critical turning point in the British approach to the region, especially since the invasion affected by implication British interests in the more important Indian sub-continent. Hoskins describes the impact of these and subsequent events:

...the well planned expedition of 1798 and later persistent efforts on the part of both France and Russia to acquire control of one or another of the shorter routes [to India] by which the feet of clay² of the British colossus might be shattered taught thorough lessons.

Thus Egypt's strategic importance as a military route to the Far East became strikingly clear. British policy, however, was focussed on Egypt in a negative way and was really directed towards Constantinople and India. It sought not to control Egypt, but rather to prevent the introduction of hostile foreign forces, such as those of France. With the exceptions of the short and ill-fated Frazer expedition of 1807 and British intervention during the war of 1839 between Muhammad Ali, Pasha of Egypt, and Mahmud II, the Ottoman Sultan, British statesmen did not seriously consider direct or permanent action in Egypt. Instead, they hoped to secure the short route to India through Egypt by exercising influence over the local rulers of that country and by circumscribing French influence at the Sultan's court in Constantinople.

During the 1820's and 1830's Britain's economic and strategic interests in Egypt gained further impetus. The introduction of long-staple Jumel cotton in 1821 became within time increasingly important to the textile interests in Lancashire. Even more significant, in the short-term, was the development of

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1. Robert L. Tignor, Modernization and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914 (Princeton, 1966), pp. 8-9.
 2. Halford Hoskins, British Routes to India (New York, 1928), p. 79.

steamship communications between Egypt and India.

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, technical improvements to the steamship permitted regular travel in the Mediterranean. Further developments extended steamship routes to the Indian Ocean. After several false starts, the advantages of the England-Egypt-Bombay route over the Cape route was clearly proven. By 1836, steamers made monthly trial runs between Bombay and the Red Sea port of Suez. Five years, later, the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company was making regular runs across the Indian Ocean, undeterred by the monsoons that had hampered sailing ships in earlier years.

The spread of steamship travel was paralleled in the 1840's by the systematic improvement of Egypt's internal communications in order to enable that country to fulfill its entrepôt role. As a result, Britain's interests, while still directed towards India, became more closely linked to developments within Egypt. In addition to considerations of trade and transport routes to India, direct British economic interests in Egypt increased. After the end of the Egyptian-Ottoman war of 1839, the Anglo-Turkish Commercial Convention of 1838 was extended to Egypt, opening the area to British commercial initiative. The effects of this were two-fold. In the first instance, there was increasing British economic and social penetration of Egypt, adversely affecting the stability of local Egyptian society and its economy. Second, British interests in Egypt began to affect the direction of Britain's 'Eastern' policy.

Egypt's growing strategic importance as the key to imperial communications was always Britain's paramount concern, taking precedence over any economic considerations. When these diverged, such as in the construction of the Suez Canal, strategic-political considerations prevailed. Despite the support of British commercial circles for the proposed canal, the government attempted to prevent its construction. This was based on the fear that a canal would invite European meddling in Egypt, nominally still part of the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, such involvement might possibly lead to the partial dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, perceived in London as a British protégé and through whose Imperial Court Britain could exercise influence to limit French activity.¹

1. For an analysis of British policy in this period, see: William L. Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, 1871-1890 (New York, 1950), p. 79.

After the completion of the Suez Canal, British policy towards Egypt was restricted to pressure and diplomatic action. This non-interventionist approach was maintained out/^{of} concern over the reactions of the European Powers, especially Russia, who might otherwise use the opportunity to attack the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The Royal Navy and the Ottoman Army served as the basis for the defence of British interests in the region.

There was, however, a slow but inexorable change to a policy of active British involvement. Growing British interest in Egypt's economy, particularly its foreign debt, and Egypt's increasing economic and social instability were largely responsible for the change. This new approach towards policy was signalled by Disraeli's purchase in 1875 of the Suez Canal Company shares held by Egypt's Khedive Ismail, and then by the Treaty of Berlin and the Cyprus Convention of 1878. In the case of the treaties, Britain showed its willingness to thwart Russian expansion in the Balkans at the expense of Ottoman territorial integrity and did not hesitate to bolster its own strategic interests in the Eastern Mediterranean by occupying Cyprus. Against this background of increasing interest and involvement in Egypt, William Gladstone, the 'Little Englander', and the Liberal Party came to power with the avowed policy of non-entanglement in foreign affairs.

The five years between 1882 and 1887 were crucial to the development of Britain's policy towards Egypt and the determination of its future direction. Despite Gladstone's previously declared policy of non-intervention in foreign affairs, this changed rapidly. ^{The perception of} Unsettled conditions in Egypt and, then, the Egyptian nationalist uprising led by Urabi Pasha in the early 1880's forced Britain, concerned over the possible intervention by the other Powers, to invade Egypt in September 1882. Gladstone justified his Government's dramatic reversal of policy in the following words:

The insecurity of the Canal, it is plain, does not exhibit to us the seat of the disease. The insecurity of the Canal is a symptom only, and the seat of the ¹disease is in the interior of Egypt and its anarchical condition.

1. W.E. Gladstone, July 24, 1882, Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Series, CCLXXII (1882), 1586.

After the invasion of Egypt, Britain attempted to reconstruct Egyptian society, ^{believed to be} shattered by the Urabi rebellion against the Khedive and his Turco-Egyptian administration, so that British interests would be secured and early withdrawal possible. Granville, Gladstone's Foreign Secretary, outlined the goals of this policy, known as 'rescue and retire,' as: 'peace, order and prosperity'; 'the stability of the Khedive's authority'; 'the judicious development of self-government'; and, 'the fulfilment of obligations towards foreign powers.'¹ The approach that would be taken to realise these goals was described in Granville's famous despatch of January 3, 1883, whereby he informed the Powers of Europe that

...the position in which Her Majesty's Government are placed towards His Highness [the Khedive] imposes upon them the duty of giving advice with the object of securing that the order of things to be established shall be of a satisfactory character and possess the elements of stability and progress.²

The British, therefore, introduced to Egypt far-reaching fiscal and administrative reforms that would assure the desired stability and permit the evolution of a pro-British native elite to prevent 'the fabric we have raised from tumbling to the ground the moment our sustaining hand is withdrawn.'³ Advice and reform became the hallmarks of the British presence in Egypt, a presence that sought to maintain the reality of British control, while retaining the appearance of local autonomy.

Although Gladstone appears to have been sincere in his adherence to the policy of 'rescue and retire', he nevertheless failed to achieve his stated aims - reform and early withdrawal. Gladstone's Government was unable to deal effectively with both the Egyptian question and the pressures of European diplomacy at the same time. This was the result of a split within Liberal ranks over the policy of 'rescue and retire', formulated on the grounds of perceived morality. Further complicating Britain's position in Egypt was France's denial of consent

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1. Granville to Dufferin, November 3, 1882, Parliamentary Papers, Vol. LXXXIII (Accounts and Papers, Vol. XLVI), Egypt No. 2 (1883), [C.-3462], p. 15.
 2. Granville to Her Majesty's Representative's abroad, January 3, 1883, ibid., pp. 35-36. This memorandum was drafted on the advice of Lord Cromer.
 3. Dufferin to Granville, February 6, 1883, Parliamentary Papers, Vol. LXXXIII (Accounts and Papers, Vol. XLVI), Egypt No. 6 (1883), [C.-3529], p. 83. This is part of the Dufferin Report that established the guidelines for the British reconstruction of Egypt.

necessary for administrative and fiscal changes in Egypt, the retention of nominal Ottoman sovereignty over Egypt, and, finally, Gladstone's inability to deal with Bismarck. Within Egypt, the difficulty of creating a sympathetic pro-British class of pashas and then the consequences of the Mahdi's rebellion in the Sudan ended hopes of an early British withdrawal.

After Lord Salisbury and the Conservatives formed a government in 1885, the policy of 'rescue and retire' was quietly abandoned. The altered international situation led to the acceptance by the British government of the long-term occupation of Egypt. Britain, as a result of imperial expansion, lost the insular and protected position it had previously enjoyed. Egypt's importance to Britain increased as the latter's military supremacy declined. After 1885, the possibility of an alliance by European Powers in opposition to Britain meant that Britain was no longer the undisputed mistress of the sea, the sole world power, and the only real colonial empire. As a result of the rise of serious rivals, control of Egypt now became vital to the well-being of the British Empire. However, a final attempt was made to resolve the Egyptian question between 1885 and 1887. During this period, Sir Henry Drummond-Wolff sought to negotiate on behalf of his Government a solution with the Ottoman rulers that would be acceptable to Europe. Blocked in this effort by France, the British Government finally decided that withdrawal from Egypt was but a distant hope and the 'veiled protectorate' began in earnest. In Salisbury's words: 'I see nothing for it but to sit still and drift awhile.'¹

Salisbury's drift lasted until the outbreak of the First World War, leaving Egypt in a vague and ill-defined limbo. Internally, European control of Egypt's finances ended and Britain re-established that country's administration on a firmer basis. These reforms, however, were mechanistic and did not attempt to affect the country's social fabric. One of the main reasons for this approach was the bitter memory of Britain's Indian experience and the subsequent Sepoy rebellion of 1857.

Externally, Egypt's formal status also remained ill-defined. Before the

1. Salisbury to Lyons, July 20, 1887, in Lord Thomas W.L. Newton, Lord Lyons: A Record of British Diplomacy (London, 1913), II, 409.

British occupation, Muhammad Ali, ruler of Egypt from 1805 until 1848, and his heirs had achieved increasing autonomy within the framework of the Ottoman Empire. After the occupation, Britain, for reasons of international diplomacy, maintained the fiction of Ottoman sovereignty, the facade of Egyptian autonomy, and the reality of British control through the British Agent and Consul General in Cairo, the British Army, the British commander and officers of the Egyptian Army, and British officials throughout the Egyptian administration. This policy, devised by Granville, Dufferin and Cromer, Britain's representative in Egypt from 1883 until 1907, gave rise to a relationship between the two countries and a status for Egypt that was described by contemporary jurists as 'peculiar and anomalous,'¹ 'too anomalous to admit of classification.'² The anomaly of control by Britain and formal sovereignty shared between the Ottoman Sultan and the Egyptian Khedive³ survived until 1914.

There was some pressure for change from within Egypt, particularly after the incident at Denshaway in 1906, when a clash between Egyptian peasants and British officers on a pigeon hunt, aroused nationalist sentiments throughout the country. On the surface, however, little changed. Cromer departed from Egypt in that same year and moderate British rule was instituted by his ailing successor, Sir Eldon Gorst, in the hope that this would secure native sympathies. Still, foreign acceptance of British control of Egypt after the Fashoda incident in 1898 and the 1904 Entente with France meant that Britain's position in Egypt was relatively stable. The start of the First World War strengthened British control and finally saw the end of the anomalous relationship when Britain declared Egypt a Protectorate in December 1914.

After the end of the war, the years spent by Field Marshal Allenby as British High Commissioner in Egypt, 1919-1925, were particularly important. In this connection, Allenby's last three years, from the unilateral declaration by Britain

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1. Thomas J. Lawrence, The Principles of International Law (Boston, 1895), p. 71.
 2. John Westlake, International Law (Cambridge, 1910), I, 27.
 3. For the concept of shared sovereignty, see: Thomas E. Holland, Studies in International Law (Oxford, 1898), p. 276. One jurist referred to Egypt as a 'half-Sovereign State.' Lassa F.L. Oppenheim, International Law: A Treatise (London, 1912), p. 123.

of Egypt's independence on February 28, 1922, until Allenby's departure in June 1925, were critical. Allenby was appointed Special High Commissioner for Egypt in March 1919, superseding Sir Reginald Wingate, in order to restore order to the country, torn by nationalist inspired rioting. He was appointed because of his fierce reputation and his record as a military commander in the East. However, he quickly adopted a surprisingly moderate policy of compromise. His approach was an attempt to blend the reality of power with the appearance of Egyptian independence so that Britain's vital interests were safeguarded. It was this policy that led Allenby to impose his will on Lloyd George's Government in London and force the unilateral declaration of Egypt's independence.

Despite this early success, followed by Egypt's adoption of a modern constitution in 1923, the end of British martial law imposed during the war, and the British withdrawal from Egypt's internal administration, Allenby's career in Egypt ended in seeming frustration. The hope for a solution to Salisbury's dilemma through the negotiation of an Anglo-Egyptian treaty by Labour leader, Ramsay MacDonald, and Egyptian nationalist, Saad Zaghlul Pasha, friends and Prime Ministers of their respective countries in 1924, ended in a welter of recriminations. Allenby, whose forcefulness led to his appointment in 1919 and the adoption of his policy in 1922, left Egypt in 1925 because of his harsh response to the anarchy and chaos unleashed by the nationalism he had permitted to develop. The fierce Allenby left because of growing concern in a never friendly Foreign Office that he was a weak and vacillating representative, who showed firmness only when dealing with the British Government.

In 1882, Lord Granville indicated the following goals of British policy in Egypt: '...the three objects should be not to throw away the advantages we have gained, to avoid any just accusation of having abandoned our pledges, and to enlist the sympathies of the Egyptians with us and not against us.'¹ These goals continued to guide the British for the next forty years and were held dear by the British officials in Egypt and the Government in London from 1922 to 1925. However, it was their translation into concrete and specific policies that resulted in frequent and bitter clashes between the British in Cairo and in London, and,

1. Granville to Harcourt, September 18, 1882, in Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism (London, 1961), p.123.

in the final analysis, it was the attempt to reconcile these possibly conflicting goals amidst the new realities of the post-war world that caused the apparent failure of Allenby's mission in Egypt.

The aim of this work is to answer some of the questions that have been raised by the formulation of Britain's policy towards Egypt during the years 1922-1925, when once again there was an attempt to regularise Anglo-Egyptian relations so that British interests, pledges and support in Egypt could be reconciled. Towards this end, there will be an examination of the factors affecting Britain's policy in three related areas: the environment - the approaches and perceptions of policy; the balance and tensions between the High Commissioner and his Residency staff in Cairo and the British government in London; and, finally, the interaction of these elements with events in Egypt, particularly the struggle between the nationalist forces, led by Zaghlul Pasha, and the Egyptian King, Ahmad Fuad.

The basic questions which this work will seek to answer are how was British policy formulated in the crucial years immediately following the declaration of nominal Egyptian independence, why did the expectations for a final resolution of the Egyptian question end in failure, and to what extent did the differences between the British in Cairo and in London influence policy and affect its outcome? This somewhat artificial albeit useful framework of analysis - the environment of policy, the balance between Cairo and London, and the interaction of these with the course of events - will, it is hoped, provide the basis for understanding the origins and development of Britain's policy towards Egypt after the First World War.

PART ONE: THE ENVIRONMENT OF POLICY

CHAPTER ONE: THE EMERGENCE OF CAIRO

British policy towards Egypt during the first years of her independence was ambiguous and at times confused. Rather than being the product of a clear pursuit of well-defined objectives, it was a reaction to events and processes often beyond the control of the British government in London.

However, not only was the substance of policy uncertain, but also the manner in which it was conceived appeared confused. Britain's policy during Lord Allenby's tenure as High Commissioner in Cairo could no longer be considered in the usual unitary terms, that is, nominally formulated within the confines of Whitehall and executed by the government's representative in Egypt.

An element of bipolarity was increasingly introduced into policy formulation. The ascendancy of London since World War I in the determination of policy slowly declined. At the same time, the British authorities in Cairo attained a position in policy formulation that approached and at times equalled that of London. These two separate and often rival foci of power radically altered the mechanics of policy formulation for Egypt.

This development poses two questions the answers to which are vital to an understanding of the evolution of Britain's Egyptian policy. First, what were the circumstances that enabled the formation of rival foci of power in Cairo and London? Second, in what way was the determination of policy affected by the emergence of Cairo and these twin spheres of authority?

Allenby's Appointment as High Commissioner

The central figure within the British establishment in Egypt was the High Commissioner. This position was created after the declaration of Great Britain's protectorate over Egypt on December 19, 1914,¹ and had a dual function. The High Commissioner represented Britain's civil authority in Egypt and, at the same

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1. Before the declaration of the protectorate the British representative in Egypt was the Agent and Consul-General who enjoyed only informal albeit immense authority. For details on the declaration of the protectorate and subsequent changes in Egypt, see: Lord Lloyd[George Ambrose], Egypt Since Cromer (London, 1933-4), I, 205ff.

time, he advised the British government, through the Foreign Office, of developments there. He was in theory a subordinate official without any independent locus standi. He was appointed by the authorities in Whitehall and generally subject to their will.

There was little divergence between theory and practice until the appointment of General Sir Edmund Hynman Allenby on March 20, 1919 as Special High Commissioner for Egypt and the Sudan. Within a few days of Allenby's appointment the existing relationship between the Foreign Office and the British representative in Egypt had already begun to show signs of change. Eventually Allenby's authority as High Commissioner rivalled that enjoyed by Lord Cromer in the early days of the British occupation of Egypt. In order to understand the basis of Allenby's position in Egypt, it is necessary to consider the circumstances surrounding his appointment.

One of the earliest indications that Allenby had a part to play in the administration of the post-war Middle East came six weeks before the end of the 1914-1918 war while Allenby was actively pursuing his campaign in Syria. Lord Curzon at the Foreign Office wrote to a colleague that if a Middle East department were to be established in the Foreign Office, then Allenby should have a role in it.¹ This role, however, was seen only in general terms and there was no sign at this stage that within a few months he would supersede the then High Commissioner in Cairo, Sir Reginald Wingate.

By January 1919, when Wingate's recall to London was being considered, Allenby was mentioned as a possible successor to the High Commissioner.² However, only a month before his appointment in Egypt, Allenby was still serving as General Officer Commanding (G.O.C.) the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (E.E.F.) and as Commander-in-Chief of the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration (O.E.T.A.) in the Middle East. It was in this capacity that he was ordered to come to Paris to advise the British ministers at the Peace Conference since he could

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1. Curzon to Lord Robert Cecil, September 29, 1918, BM, Cecil Papers, add.51077.
 2. Robert Cecil wrote to Balfour, the Foreign Secretary, that 'I spoke to the P.M. & suggested that if Wingate was recalled Allenby would be a suitable successor. This he warmly approved & so did the C.I.G.S. to whom I mentioned it confidentially. But the P.M. wanted nothing done which would preclude Wingate's return to Egypt if that were decided on.' Cecil to Balfour, January 4, 1919, Balfour Papers, FO/800/215.

'speak with more authority about Syria, Palestine and Turkish questions generally than anybody else.'¹

While the British government was occupied with the negotiations in Paris and Allenby was travelling to Europe, the political situation in Egypt deteriorated. In the early part of the war Egypt enjoyed relative peace and prosperity. Order was maintained by the British forces and by the judicious use of martial law declared on November 2, 1914.

During the final years of the war, however, this peace was uneasy at best. There was growing resentment over British wartime demands and impositions. Although Britain had formally accepted 'exclusive responsibility for the defence of Egypt'² during the war, recruiting for the ancillary Labour Corps and Camel Transport Corps was instituted in 1917. Widespread collections in the provinces for the Red Cross Fund and attendant abuses added to local resentment. Furthermore, over the years the number of British officials serving in Egypt had increased. This resulted from the declaration of the protectorate which gave Britain a greater role in the country's administration. The rise in the number of officials was accompanied by a decline in their quality and this did little to endear the protectorate or the 'protectors' to the Egyptians.³ The situation at this point was volatile and little was required to translate aimless general resentment into specific political unrest.

Within a week of the war's conclusion, a deputation of Egyptian nationalists led by Sa'ad Zaghlul Pasha called on the British High Commissioner, Sir Reginald Wingate, on November 17, 1918.⁴ The deputation presented Wingate with a

1. P.H. Kerr to Lloyd George, February 28, 1919, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/89/2/34.
2. See the text of the Declaration of the Protectorate, Lloyd, op.cit., I, 376-9.
3. For details of the British administration of Egypt during the war and political difficulties, see: Janice Terry, Sir Reginald Wingate as High Commissioner in Egypt (Ph.D. Thesis, London University, 1968), pp.77-114; and Lloyd, op.cit., I, 234-47. For criticism levelled against the quality of British officials during the war, see: Report of the Special Mission to Egypt, March 3, 1920, FO/371/6295, pp.5-6.
4. This short description of the events leading up to the crisis of March 1919 is based largely on a paper prepared for the War Cabinet by Ronald Graham of the Foreign Office: R[onald]. G[raham]., Note on the Unrest in Egypt, 162/6/5; and, Sir Reginald Wingate, Rough Note to Foreign Office, 3rd April, 1919, SAD, Wingate Papers, 162/2.

programme for Egypt's independence and requested permission to travel to Britain to confer with the British government. This request was curtly refused by the Foreign Office, now engaged in preparations for the Peace Conference. Then a similar request for permission to travel to London was made by the Egyptian Prime Minister, Husayn Rushdi Pasha. This, too, was refused and resulted in the resignation of the Egyptian government on December 5.

Disturbances quickly spread throughout Egypt. At the beginning of January 1919 Wingate was directed to return to London to explain the situation to the Cabinet. Sir Milne Cheetham, Counsellor at the Residency, remained in Cairo as the Acting High Commissioner. Upon his arrival in London, Wingate urged that the nationalists be permitted to travel to Europe. Arthur Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, considered these recommendations while in Paris and on February 26 agreed that the Egyptian ministerial delegation be permitted to come to London. Permission, however, was not extended to the nationalist deputation since it was feared that this would legitimise its unofficial standing and provide unwarranted sanction for its programme.

Ahmad Fuad, the Sultan of Egypt, was informed of Balfour's decision on March 2. The Egyptian ministry, however, persisted in its resignation which was accepted by the Sultan. Nevertheless the Residency in Cairo reported that the situation was improving. It was believed that the nationalist camp was divided and its popularity on the wane. Then, on March 6, Sir Milne Cheetham informed the Foreign Office that Zaghlul was seeking to prevent the formation of a new government. Moreover, the nationalists had warned the Sultan in ominous tones of the consequences of following the advice of the Residency. The Sultan was shaken by these veiled threats and Cheetham, together with his advisers, felt that Zaghlul should be arrested and deported immediately. The arrest and deportation of Zaghlul and three other nationalist leaders¹ on March 7, according to one observer, 'transformed Egypt from a scene of peace to a welter of anarchy and rapine.'²

This was the situation with which the British cabinet was faced only a few days before Allenby was due to arrive in Paris. Throughout the final stages of

1. These four soon came to be known as the 'Four Pashas'. They were Sa'ad Zaghlul, Ismail Sidqi, Muhammad Mahmud and Hamid al-Bassal.

2. R.G., op.cit., p.4.

this crisis Sir Reginald Wingate to his dismay and later bitterness¹ was relegated to a secondary role. With the rapid deterioration of the situation in Egypt, Lord Curzon, who was at the Foreign Office in Balfour's absence, cabled him in Paris that:

Had Allenby been in Egypt I should have placed him in full charge. But I understand that he arrives in Paris tomorrow and will not be free to return for a few days. Will you consult with him, as to steps to be taken.²

The situation in Egypt grew steadily worse and on March 17 Cheetham cabled that it had become necessary to abandon Upper Egypt and its inhabitants to the rioters.³ Allenby appeared to be the only available figure who could deal with the uprising. Thoroughly alarmed by the situation, Curzon urged that Allenby's 'business in Paris should be expedited and that he should be able to leave for Egypt by the end of the week.'⁴ Allenby's military experience in the East and

1. Indicative of the British government's general loss of confidence in Wingate were the comments of the powerful Conservative leader, Bonar Law, that 'Wingate makes a poor impression and I would have no faith whatever in his judgment.' Bonar Law to Lloyd George, April 3, 1919, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/30/3/42. Wingate was extremely bitter over his relegation to a secondary role and his eventual replacement by Allenby in October 1919. In reply to Curzon's letters informing him of Allenby's permanent appointment as High Commissioner, Wingate wrote that 'I do not consider the reasons given in your official letter for my treatment are, in any sense, a justification for the manner in which I - as His Majesty's accredited Representative in Egypt - have been removed from my post.' Wingate to Curzon, October 4, 1919, SAD, Wingate Papers, 162/4. Wingate feared that the public would feel that "poor Wingate has been a failure - he did well in the past - Egypt was evidently too much for him." Wingate to Milner, October 12, 1919, loc.cit. For some justification of these fears, see the leader in the Times, March 25, 1919.
2. Curzon to Balfour, March 16, 1919, Tel.No. 307, FO/371/3714.
3. Cheetham to Foreign Office, March 17, 1919, Tel.No. 403, FO/371/3714.
4. Curzon to Balfour, March 19, 1919, Tel.No. 328, FO/371/3714. Throughout this period there appears to have been a considerable gap between events in Egypt and the reaction to them in London. Several writers have noted that General Bulfin had the situation well in hand when Allenby arrived in Egypt on March 25. See: Brian Gardner, Allenby (London, 1965), p.220; and, Lloyd, op.cit., I, 299-300. This gap was due to the fact that the telegraph wires had been cut by rioters causing delays in the receipt of messages in London.

the belief that 'he was the kind of tough soldier, known to the army as "the Bull", who would stand no nonsense,'¹ made him seem ideally suited for the job. Curzon was supported in this view by other senior members of the Foreign Office who felt that Allenby's military background and his enormous personal prestige would enable him to cope with the situation where others had failed.² Consequently on March 20, 1919, Allenby began his journey to Cairo as the Special High Commissioner for Egypt and the Sudan.

Allenby's Authority

From this schematic description of the events leading to Allenby's appointment, three major factors emerge indicating the source of his formidable authority from the outset of his tenure as High Commissioner.

In the first place Allenby's appointment came as a reaction to a situation which was believed to be completely out of hand. This meant that he was granted wide-ranging powers made very clear in the letter of appointment cabled to him while en route to Egypt:

You are directed to exercise supreme authority in all matters Military and Civil, to take all such measures as you consider necessary and expedient to restore law and order in those countries [Egypt and the Sudan], and to order and administer in all matters as may be required by the necessity of maintaining the King's Protectorate over Egypt on a secure and equitable basis.³

Given the circumstances of Allenby's appointment and the mandate that he had, the advice of the new British representative in Egypt would carry enormous weight and could only be ignored at great risk. Allenby was therefore afforded freedom of action which his immediate predecessors, such as McMahon and Wingate, appointed under different circumstances, did not enjoy.

The second reason for Allenby's great authority was his unique official

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1. A. Duff Cooper [Viscount Norwich], Old Men Forget: The Autobiography of Duff Cooper (London, 1953), p.101. Duff Cooper, a member of the Foreign Office, soon joined the Egyptian Section of the Eastern Department.
 2. Support in particular came from Lord Robert Cecil and Ronald Graham. Lt. Col. G.S. Symes to Wingate, March 12, 13 and 18, 1919, SAD, Wingate Papers, 172/5. For the reasons given to Wingate, see: Balfour to Wingate, March 25, 1919, SAD, Wingate Papers, 237/3.
 3. Curzon to Allenby, March 21, 1919, en clair, FO/371/3714.

position within the British hierarchy in Egypt. When Allenby assumed the High Commissioner's office he was not asked to relinquish his command of the British forces in Egypt. On the contrary, 'it was thought essential for the restoration of public order and the suppression of organised violence that full civil and military authority should be concentrated in the hand of a single individual.'¹ Throughout the war authority in Egypt had been shared. The High Commissioner was charged with the civil administration of the country; the British military forces were directed and martial law was administered by the G.O.C. E.E.F. in Cairo. Although this partnership was amicable enough, it nonetheless detracted from the authority of the High Commissioner, especially when it was necessary to divert manpower and resources from civil to military needs. The amalgamation of civil and military authority gave Allenby obvious power. It also increased his standing vis-a-vis London since the advice of the High Commissioner now automatically bore the imprimatur of the military authorities and could not be easily gainsaid.

Finally, Allenby was chosen as the Special High Commissioner not because of his reputation as a successful administrator or as a diplomatist who could deal with a delicate political situation. He was appointed because of his enormous personal prestige as a military commander, as the conqueror of Jerusalem. This enhanced his official position enabling him to take whatever measures he felt the situation required. In fact if there was any doubt about his appointment, it was precisely because it was feared that he might turn out to be 'too fierce' for Egypt.²

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1. Curzon to Wingate, October 2, 1919, SAD, Wingate Papers, 162/4.
 2. Curzon to Balfour, March 29, 1919, Balfour Papers, FO/800/215. P.G. Elgood, an inspector in the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior, wrote that 'there were some who questioned the wisdom, at so critical a point, in the relations of Great Britain with Egypt, of appointing a soldier to the post of High Commissioner.' P.G. Elgood, Egypt and the Army (London, 1924), p.350. Hardinge, the British ambassador in Paris, for this very reason opposed the appointment of a strong figure like Allenby because 'the necessity for a skilled diplomatist and administrator to deal with a very difficult and complicated situation.' C.H. Hardinge, Old Diplomacy (London, 1947), p.234. Cf. Sir Valentine Chirol, The Egyptian Problem (London, 1920), p.190. In Egypt, however, some believed that Allenby's appointment presaged a dramatic change in British policy. For example, one long-time resident wrote that: 'England was in a quandary...A new policy should be tried. The man chosen to carry it into effect was Lord Allenby.' Mabel Caillard, A Lifetime in Egypt, 1876-1935 (London, 1935), p.211.

For the authorities in London, Allenby's personal reputation and official position were assets within the purely Egyptian context. However, in the event of conflict between Cairo and London, Allenby's standing would make him a formidable opponent.

Allenby's First Clash With London

When Allenby arrived in Cairo on March 25, 1919, his first step was to assert the authority that had been granted him. On the evening after his arrival he stated his intentions to a group of Egyptians assembled at the Residency:

First, to bring the present disturbances to an end.

Secondly, to make careful inquiry into all matters which have caused discontent in the country.

Thirdly, to redress such grievances as appear justifiable.¹

Although the disturbances which had brought Allenby back to Egypt were by now well under control, this was an unusually moderate approach for a general who had been appointed because of his martial qualities.

It is true that Allenby's outward manner was almost a caricature of the front-line general. It has been described by his admiring official biographer as often 'gruff and abrupt,'² characteristics which may have contributed to his reputation for being inarticulate at conferences. His notorious temper and impatience added to the legend of Allenby, 'the Bull,' and was the source of much of his difficulty when he fought in Europe during the war. Junior officers said of this descendant of Oliver Cromwell that 'to be told off...was like being blown from the muzzle of a gun which, however, when you regained the ground, seemed to bear you no malice.'³ Allenby, however, was by no means the simple figure that his rough and ponderous demeanour might indicate. His victories in the East often overshadow the fact that he served for many years as a staff officer when he learned that preparation and caution are cardinal principles of

1. A.P. Wavell, Allenby in Egypt (London, 1943), p.43.

2. Ibid., p.16.

3. Sir Ronald Storrs, Orientations (London, 1945), p.256. Two of Allenby's biographers have pointed to his impatience and temper as the great flaws in his character. Later events in Egypt appear to bear this out. Gardner, op. cit., pp.77, 177; and, Wavell, op.cit., p.20.

command.¹ In addition, although he did not hesitate to take strong measures if he thought them appropriate, Allenby was not like those rigid generals of the trenches to whom the excessive use of troops was second nature.²

Finally, Allenby's one previous experience in civilian administration as head of the O.E.T.A. in the Middle East, indicates his approach in dealing with government authorities. While he demanded instant obedience from his subordinates, he had no qualms about ignoring unacceptable instructions from his own superiors. A striking example of this was his open disregard of Foreign Office directives regarding the implementation of the Balfour Declaration in Palestine.³ This should have been an indication of the attitude Allenby might adopt as High Commissioner in Egypt.

The first indication that Cairo and London might differ on the measures required for the pacification of Egypt became evident within a few days of Allenby's arrival. Since the disturbances were well under control, Allenby turned his attention to the political issue that had precipitated the riots: travel to Britain by the nationalists. Its solution was the first test of strength between Allenby and the Foreign Office.

Curzon, who in effect was serving as Foreign Secretary, was from the start adamantly opposed to granting permission since this would be 'yielding to force when persuasion had failed of its effect.'⁴ After the outbreak of widespread rioting, Wingate, now in London, also felt that the authorities in Egypt 'must on no account give way to the violence of the Nationalists.'⁵ However, in Egypt

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1. In a note for a talk on his principles as a commander, the first on his list was 'thorough preparation.' Cited in Gardner, op.cit., p.195.
 2. Allenby's willingness to be harsh when necessary can be seen in his later comment to Wingate that 'the execution of the Mamour of Assiut has had a really good effect.' Allenby to Wingate, June 22, 1919, SAD, Wingate Papers, 151/5. On the other hand, his general reluctance to use force excessively is seen in the delay in calling out troops in the Alexandria riots of 1921 which he explained on the grounds of not wanting 'to interfere with my troops unless the life, limb or interests of Europeans are in danger.' Allenby to his mother, May 21, 1921, cited in Wavell, op.cit., p.54.
 3. For details of Allenby's approach during this period see the comments of Major-General Sir Arthur Money, the Chief Administrator for O.E.T.A. Money to A.P. Wavell, December 27, 1936, STAC, Allenby Papers.
 4. Curzon to Cheetham, March 17, 1919, Tel. No. 349, FO/371/3714. Also, see: Curzon to Balfour, March 16, 1919, Tel. No. 307, FO/371/3714.
 5. Wingate Note, February 3, 1922, SAD, Wingate Papers, 162/1. Also, see: Wingate to Hardinge, March 23, 1919, CUL, Hardinge Papers, Vol. 40; and, Note by Wingate on Situation in Egypt, March 21, 1919, FO/371/3714.

Sir Milne Cheetham, the British advisors and the military authorities believed that permission 'is the only solution which in general estimate would be successful.'¹ Thus when it was necessary for Allenby to adopt a course of action he was confronted by the traditional divergence between London and Cairo based on local considerations. Allenby chose the moderate course counselled by his advisors and opposed by London. In a cable that revealed his approach to the difficulties in Egypt, Allenby wrote on March 31:

I propose with your convenience to issue passports to any respectable Egyptians who may wish to visit Europe, without reference to colour of their requirements...

I have shown I can repress agitation and action which I propose to take will have good effect.²

This telegram resulted in a flurry of cables to Balfour in Paris. With the support of senior Foreign Office officials, an agitated Curzon wrote to Balfour on April 1 that Allenby did not understand the situation and that his advice should not be accepted.³ Balfour replied that the 'Prime Minister and I are of the opinion that (? as) Allenby was appointed Special High Commissioner of Egypt to deal with the situation there his advice cannot be disregarded.' He then added that 'it is important to avoid any appearance of mistrusting his present policy.'⁴ Although Curzon attempted to have the question reviewed,⁵ and sought the support of Andrew Bonar Law,⁶ the dispute inevitably resolved in Allenby's favour. On April 5, Allenby received formal confirmation that his policy had been fully accepted together with an expression of the Prime Minister's confidence in his judgment.⁷

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1. Cheetham to Foreign Office, March 19, 1919, Tel. No. 408, FO/371/3714. For other expressions of support see: Cheetham to Foreign Office, March 15, 1919, Tel. No. 393, FO/371/3714.
 2. Allenby to Foreign Office, March 31, 1919, Tel. No. 465, FO/371/3714.
 3. Curzon to Balfour, April 1, 1919, Balfour Papers, FO/800/216.
 4. Balfour to Curzon, April 2, 1919, Tel. No. 621, FO/371/3714.
 5. Curzon to Balfour, April 3, 1919; and, Curzon to Balfour, April 4, 1919, FO/800/216.
 6. Bonar Law did not agree that 'Allenby's proposal is fatal.' Bonar Law to Balfour, April 3, 1919, Balfour Papers, FO/800/216. For details of the meeting between Curzon, Ronald Graham, Wingate and Bonar Law, see: Bonar Law to Lloyd George, April 4, 1919, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/30/3/42.
 7. Foreign Office to Allenby, April 5, 1919, Tel. No. 427, FO/371/3714.

Allenby's victory over the Foreign Office was strongly resented. The general feeling was that they had been deceived by Allenby and his fearsome reputation.¹ Curzon wrote to the Prime Minister that 'Allenby's policy has landed us in a very serious position.'² He was supported in this attitude by his staff at the Foreign Office.

The question, however, is not whether Allenby's was the correct policy but rather what it presaged. As a result of the circumstances surrounding the appointment of the Special High Commissioner and due to his personal standing, Cairo began to emerge as a major factor in policy formulation. This test of strength pointed to Allenby's appreciation of his position and the approach he would often adopt regarding the Egyptian question. This first round was thus extremely important as it defined the lines of future contention and was an indication of Cairo's position in relation to the authorities in London.

The British in Cairo: Hierarchy and Structure

Allenby was sent to Egypt in answer to pressing military needs. Still, his major function was essentially civil. This was both true before and after Britain's unilateral declaration of Egypt's independence on February 28, 1922. His responsibilities were administrative and diplomatic. He dealt, within defined limits and depending upon the circumstances, with internal Egyptian affairs. At the same time, he was charged with the formulation of general proposals and the implementation of British policy. In the execution of these duties, the composition, organisational structure, and attitudes of Allenby's staff were extremely important in determining his approach to London and to Egypt.

The British officials who assisted the High Commissioners in Egypt, and the British Consuls-General before them, did not constitute a monolithic organisation

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1. Hardinge to Sir B. Lucknow, April 23, 1919, CUL, Hardinge Papers, Vol. 40. Hardinge later wrote of Allenby that '...it was imagined by Lloyd George that in him he had found a strong man....No greater mistake was ever made.' Hardinge, loc. cit. There is some evidence that Allenby later regretted this particular instance of leniency on travel by the nationalists. Lord Milner wrote on December 28, 1919 in the diary of his Mission to Egypt that 'I found Allenby rather reluctant to take my suggestions as he argued, not without force, that when he had shown clemency in the past it had been taken as a sign of weakness.' BLO, Milner Papers, Box 290/p.83.
 2. Curzon to Lloyd George, April 15, 1919, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/12/1/16.

with sharply drawn lines of authority and areas of responsibility. The High Commissioner's advisers comprised several groups, some clearly defined and others amorphous. They had different origins, at times unrelated functions, and hence divergent modes of approach and operation. They were bound primarily in their service of Britain's interests and were headed, officially or otherwise, by the High Commissioner who stood at the apex of the local British hierarchy.

Generally speaking, the British officials could be divided into two broad groups: those formally attached to the office of the High Commissioner and collectively known as 'the Residency'; and, those employed by the Egyptian government as advisers to or officials in the various Egyptian ministries. Both groups constituted the general body that assisted the High Commissioner in carrying out his functions.¹

The more clearly defined group was the Residency staff. They were to some extent analogous with the staff that served in other British diplomatic or consular missions. They were drawn from the ranks of the foreign service, often with previous diplomatic experience in other countries. Although their standing was diplomatic or consular, and their theoretical function was to assist the head of the Mission, their responsibilities went beyond this. To the extent that the sphere of authority of the British representative in Egypt exceeded that of an ordinary diplomatic representative, the duties of the Residency staff also exceeded those of their counterparts in other chanceries.

Sir Milne Cheetham broadly described the functions of the Residency officials during the tenure of two earlier consuls-general in the following words:

Both Lord Kitchener and Sir E. Gorst...encouraged their staff to deal with the affairs of the whole administration, as they were at one time or another referred to the Agency. A number of these affairs would indeed be treated almost entirely between the Counsellor and the administrative official concerned, the result being submitted to the Consul-General in the form of a draft or verbal communication.²

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1. Much of the material used in this discussion of the structure and development of the British hierarchy in Egypt is taken from an unsigned and undated Residency memorandum found among the papers of Sir Reginald Wingate. From internal evidence it is clear that this ten-paged document was composed by Sir Milne Cheetham, the wartime Counsellor of the Residency, sometime in 1917. (The document is hereafter referred to as the Cheetham Memorandum). Unsigned Memorandum, SAD, Wingate Papers, 151/1.
 2. Cheetham Memorandum, pp.1-2.

The Counsellor and the Head of the Chancery were the senior members of the official establishment. They were the avenues of approach to the British representative and had extensive authority. In the course of their work they 'drafted nearly all the correspondence to the Foreign Office, wrote reports, interviewed officials and other visitors.'¹ Foreign Office officials who served in the Residency enjoyed a degree of administrative authority unknown in other diplomatic missions and had functions that were largely inconsonant with their professional background. Nonetheless they remained by virtue of their training and experience members of a Service that had few roots in Egypt itself.

The second group assisting the High Commissioner consisted of the British officials in the Egyptian civil service. The origins of this group on the whole differed from those of the Residency staff, and the functions of its members, though related in general purpose to that of the official establishment, diverged in several important respects.

This group had its beginnings in the early days of the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. At that time it was deemed necessary to import experts to re-constitute many areas of Egypt's internal administration and to appoint advisers to supervise vital ministries such as Interior, Finance and Justice. The first officials to arrive were Anglo-Indian civil servants brought to Egypt by Cromer.² From 1902 onwards such positions were filled from the ranks of British universities through the Appointments Committees at Oxford, Cambridge and Trinity^{College}, or the Selection Board at the Ministry of Finance in Cairo.³ The ministerial advisers

1. Ibid., p.2.

2. For details of the impact of the Anglo-Indian officials on Egypt see: Roger Owen, 'The Influence of Lord Cromer's Indian Experience on British Policy in Egypt, 1883-1907,' St. Anthony's Papers, XVII (1965), pp.109-139.

3. For details, see: Egyptian and Sudanese Civil Services, Information to Candidates in Financial Adviser's Office, Cairo to Foreign Office, July 19, 1906, FO/371/67; R.L. Tignor, The Modernization of Egypt and British Colonial Rule in Egypt, 1882-1914 (Princeton, 1966), pp.185ff; and, H.E. Bowman, Middle East Window (London, 1942), pp.38 and 109-10. Also, see the comments of W. Allard who served in Egypt: W. Allard to A.L. Odell, November 29, 1967, STAC, Allard Papers. For certain higher-ranking positions, such as some of the adviserships, and Under-Secretaryships, it was necessary at times to go outside the Egyptian civil service and find qualified appointees closely connected with the British Foreign Office. Cheetham Memorandum, pp.8-9.

were the most prominent members of this group. Next in importance were the permanent heads of the various departments, the Under-Secretaries, and then the various British officials employed in a technical capacity. The function of all the officials, at whatever level, was essentially administrative or executive. They either 'advised' the ministry or they held an executive position within it.

Though there was close cooperation between the two groups of British officials in resolving major administrative questions, often without reference to the relevant Egyptian ministers, they differed in their approach. The senior British members of the Egyptian civil service were inevitably influenced by their technical training and their experience in Egypt. Hence their frame of reference was far narrower than that of their compatriots in the Residency. A stable balance was maintained between these two groups because the three British representatives in Egypt between 1882 and 1914 - Cromer, Gorst and Kitchener, had wide experience in Egyptian affairs or powerful personalities.

During the 1914-18 War the balance between the British officials and the Residency staff underwent a change to the detriment of the latter. The general reasons for the diminished importance of the Residency were given as 'the result of the war, of the diminution of civil business, of the dislocation of ordinary administrative relations and of the transfer of interest and activity to new and semi-militarized departments.'¹ There were, however, far more specific and immediate reasons for the need to rely more heavily on the British advisers and the officials in the Egyptian civil service.

The first signs of change in the organisation of the British hierarchy in Egypt came a few months after Sir Henry McMahon was appointed High Commissioner in December 1914. Unlike his predecessors, McMahon, who served for many years in India, had no knowledge of Egyptian affairs.² Therefore he was forced to depend on his staff and advisers for local expertise, and turned for assistance mainly to the most experienced group of British officials in Egypt - the advisers.

1. Ibid., p.4.

2. Kitchener, then High Commissioner, was in London at the outbreak of war and was appointed Minister for War for the duration of hostilities. Since it was thought that the war would soon be over, Kitchener wanted to keep his position in Egypt open and thus McMahon's appointment was only a stopgap measure. For details see: E. Kedourie, 'Saad Zaghlul and the British,' St. Antony's Papers, XI (1961), p.144.

Consequently, McMahon quickly decentralised Residency control of Egyptian affairs thus enhancing the position of the local British officials. This meant that

...the British heads of the various Ministries were in the future to be more completely responsible for the actions of their Departments. Reference to the High Commissioner was apparently to be ^{less} frequent and his control less personal and far-reaching than that of the Consuls-General who preceded him. In the case of correspondence with the Foreign Office it was laid down in one instance that matter to be forwarded should reach the Residency in its final form.¹

The increased responsibilities of officials outside the High Commissioner's staff resulted in a drastic change in the work of the Residency staff who, until then, had overall charge of Egyptian affairs. Members of the Residency now found themselves relegated 'to clerical duties and registration, cyphering, archives etc., and not expected to be interested in departmental business or informed of its details.'² Cheetham, the Residency Counsellor, complained that he was 'relegated to a distinctly more subordinate and less active post, and henceforth little informed of and hardly ever consulted with regard to issued[sic] of first class importance.'³ The same was true of the Chancery secretaries whose duties now were of a purely formal character with little real responsibility. This meant that to a large extent the High Commissioner's local policy would be determined by advisers who were 'Egyptian' in their background rather than Foreign Office.

There are a number of other reasons for the rising importance of the British advisers and officials. These were relevant after the war as well.

In the first place, the Foreign Office staff at the Residency often served in Egypt for only short periods of time and were unable to acquire sufficient local experience in order to function effectively. This was a problem from the start of the British occupation and Ronald Storrs, the wartime Oriental Secretary in Cairo, noted that

Lord Cromer and succeeding Consuls General were assisted in their tasks by Diplomats from the Foreign Office endowed with varying degrees of zeal and ability; but these were wandering stars, at

1. Cheetham Memorandum, p.5.

2. Ibid., p.1.

3. Ibid., p.3

any moment liable to shoot or be shot from the Egyptian firmament.¹

If this was a serious problem during the tenure of experienced men like Cromer and his immediate successors, it posed insurmountable difficulties for McMahon. This flaw in the Residency system was acknowledged even by those officials who wished to return to the pre-war balance between advisers and Foreign Office staff.² The lack of Residency personnel with adequate local experience continued to be a problem throughout the war and in the early post-war years. In fact this was the reason that the Milner Mission later recommended the reorganisation of the Residency, the chief aim of which 'should be to ensure continuity, and the constant presence...of an adequate number of men of local knowledge and experience.'³

Brief tenure, however, was not the only reason for the Residency system falling into disrepair. The second important factor was the poor organisation of work. There was no consistency in the allocation of issues to specific individuals. Residency officials were thus unable to familiarise themselves adequately with given local areas. The effect of this, according to Storrs, 'was sometimes trying for the Residency; for the Administration it was maddening.'⁴ Sir Henry McMahon in testifying before the British Cabinet's Egyptian Administration Committee in 1917 on the problems he faced, gave the reasons for turning to the British advisers and 'explained to the Committee the difficulties he himself encountered owing to the absence at the Residency of records and precedents, as also the inexpert and transitory character of the official staff.'⁵

There was little change with the appointment of Sir Reginald Wingate as High Commissioner at the end of 1916. Wingate had had virtually no experience in Egypt.

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1. Storrs, op.cit., pp.58-9; cf., Chirol, op.cit., pp.207-8.
 2. Cheetham Memorandum, p.10. Also, see a paraphrase of Tel. No. 159 (undated) from Cheetham to the Foreign Office on the need for experienced personnel in the senior Residency positions. SAD, Wingate Papers, 162/5.
 3. Report of the Special Mission to Egypt, March 3, 1920, FO/371/3714, p.5.
 4. Storrs, op.cit., p.143.
 5. Draft Report of the Egyptian Administration Committee, October 1917, p.4, in PCL, Storrs Papers, II/4. Storrs was the Committee Secretary.

Most of his work had been in the Sudan where he had been Governor-General since 1899. His ignorance of local Egyptian affairs was telling. According to one close observer, he was 'for all his knowledge, somewhat staggered by the depth and complexities of the eddies and cross currents of the Lower Nile.'¹ By the time Wingate had arrived in Egypt the British advisers and officials had consolidated their position and Wingate's term was marked by his unsuccessful attempt to bring them under control.²

When Allenby came to Egypt as Special High Commissioner, the process which had begun with McMahon continued unabated. Initially the impact of the advisers with their specialist knowledge and experience was great. Allenby's only previous experience in civilian administration was during his command of the O.E.T.A. in the Middle East and then only for a few months. His total lack of experience in the internal organisation of Egypt, his wartime administration of martial law notwithstanding, increased the need for expert assistance. Allenby's military training did not present any obstacle to the delegation of executive authority. In fact, Allenby, the staff officer, was considered 'a delegator supreme' and the extent to which he relied on his staff in wartime was at times a source of considerable surprise and some criticism.³

Reliance on staff was not limited to military affairs alone but was characteristic of Allenby's brief administration of civil affairs in Palestine. After Allenby's decision to disregard Foreign Office instructions regarding the Balfour Declaration, he gave his chief aide, General Money, what amounted to a carte blanche in the latter's dealings with London. Money later wrote that 'the Chief told me that he would sign any letter that I drafted for him; and that in case of urgency I could send any cable in his name provided I sent him a copy of it.'⁴

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1. Storrs to Ronald Graham, January 31, 1917, PCL, Storrs Papers, II/4.
 2. Terry, op.cit., pp.119-33.
 3. Gardner, op.cit., pp.202-3. Wavell, who was a member of Allenby's wartime staff and later one of his aides in Egypt, made similar observations. Wavell, op.cit., p.21.
 4. A. Money to A.P. Wavell, December 27, 1936, STAC, Allenby Papers.

This approach continued in Egypt where Allenby relied on the local British officials for assistance in dealing with questions with which he was generally unfamiliar. This was facilitated by the fact that some of the advisers to whom he turned most frequently had served on his staff during the war. One example was Brigadier Gilbert Clayton who served as the Chief Political Officer of the E.E.F. under Allenby and as adviser to the Ministry of Interior in the crucial period leading up to the unilateral declaration of Egypt's independence. It was only natural that Allenby should turn to a man like Clayton in important matters rather than to the staff of the Residency whom at first he in any case regarded as 'weak-kneed blackcoats.'¹ The disparity in experience between the Residency staff and the British advisers and local officials also contributed to Allenby's approach.²

As a result, most of the major proposals on British policy sent by the High Commissioner to London before 1922 were initially formulated by the advisers.³ For example, the idea for the concession of Egypt's formal independence by Great Britain, which Allenby demanded in early 1922, originated among the advisers and

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1. Wavell, op.cit., p.56.
 2. The experience of the ministerial advisers who served during Allenby's tenure as High Commissioner was enormous. A brief summary of the careers in Egypt of four of the more important advisers, such as Amos, Clayton, Dowson and Patterson, shows this clearly. M.S. Amos lived in Egypt as a child when his father was a Court of Appeal judge. Amos was on the Bench of the Cairo Native Court (1903) and the Native Court of Appeal (1906). He was the Director of the Khedival School of Law (1913-15), Acting Judicial Adviser (1917-19) and permanent Judicial Adviser (1919-25). DNB, 1931-40, pp.12-13. G.F. Clayton served under Kitchener in the Sudan (1898) and then joined the Egyptian army (1900). He was appointed assistant adjutant-general and private secretary to the Governor-General of the Sudan (1903). He was permanently transferred to the Sudan Government Service (1910) and then was Sudan Agent and Director of Intelligence in Cairo (1914). During the war Clayton was Director of Military Intelligence at GHQ in Egypt and later Chief Political Officer of the E.E.F. (1917). After the war he served as adviser to the Ministry of Interior (1919-22). DNB, 1922-30, pp.186-8. E.M. Dowson was in the Egyptian Service for twenty-two years. He was the Acting Financial Adviser and then Financial Adviser. Times, July 7, 1923. R.S. Patterson was a member of the Egyptian civil service for over twenty years. He was the adviser to the Minister of Interior. Times, July 7, 1923.
 3. For examples of this, see: The memorandum on Egypt's future submitted by Amos and Patterson in April 1921 and Allenby's support, Allenby to Curzon, April 16, 1921, Desp. No. 311, FO/371/6295; the memorandum by Sir William Hayter, Legal Adviser to the Minister of Finance and Allenby's support, Allenby to Curzon, June 17, 1921, Desp. No. 530, FO/371/6298; and, Allenby's comments on the Clayton memorandum of October 8, 1921, Allenby to Foreign Office, October 22, 1921, in FO/371/6306.

appears in a memorandum drafted by Dowson, Clayton and Patterson and Hayter.¹ Furthermore, when Allenby was ordered to return to London in January 1922 at the height of the crisis over Egypt's independence, he was accompanied by his two most trusted advisers, Amos and Clayton.

Although the size and influence of the 'unofficial' British hierarchy declined after Egypt's independence, it would be a mistake to underestimate its impact on the High Commissioner in the important formative years when the foundations of his future policy were laid. Cheetham was correct in fearing that in the end this would result in the diminution of direct Foreign Office control over Egyptian affairs.² This, however, did not stem from total domination of Egypt's administration by non-Residency staff as much as from the eventual 'Egyptianisation' of the Residency staff.

Much has been written about the ascendancy of non-Residency staff and the consequent change of Cairo's total approach. This does not mean, though, that the attitudes of the Foreign Service officials in Cairo who internalised local perceptions and those of the Foreign Office home establishment in London were congruent. Although the divisions between the two at times may not have been as great as those between Residency and non-Residency staff, they nonetheless existed. In indicating the general nature of such a division, one observer tersely noted that 'the Diplomatic Service...needed nationalizing and the Foreign Office internationalizing.'³ Basically it was a question of where a given issue was considered, in Cairo or in London. With the passage of time this, too, inevitably lent impetus to the emergence of Cairo as an independent focus of power which, under the prevailing circumstances, would rival London.

When all these factors are considered together, it becomes evident that the potential for a rival focus of power in Cairo indeed existed. That it emerged so rapidly during the Allenby years must, to a great extent, be ascribed to the rapid changes in Egypt imposing a policy of reaction on Britain, to Allenby's position and personality, and, finally, to the organisation and approach of his advisers and staff, all of which served as powerful catalytic agents in the determination of Cairo's role in policy formulation.

1. A draft copy of this memorandum is in the SAD, Clayton Papers, 470/14.

2. Cheetham Memorandum, pp.6-7.

3. Donald G. Bishop, The Administration of British Foreign Relations (Syracuse, 1961), p.208. For details about Wingate and officials, see: Terry, op.cit.

CHAPTER TWO: LONDON - THE PREOCCUPIED CENTRE

After the end of the 1914-18 War, the British government was faced with a tangled web of interests, pressures and altered circumstances. The Cabinet system that had evolved in the nineteenth century now had to cope with the complexities of the post-war era. The Foreign Office, with its beginnings in a simpler age, had to deal with issues and crises that strained the 1918-1922 Lloyd George government - a coalition of unequal partners no longer united by wartime discipline. After the fall of the Lloyd George government, the political system was further tested by three general elections in as many years.

In addition, the cost of the war and the ensuing economic difficulties drained Britain's resources. The rapid demobilisation that followed the war came precisely at a time when Britain was called upon to support an expanded peacetime presence throughout the world. The crises and upheavals in Turkey, India, Europe and Ireland in the early 1920's and then the preoccupation with European security taxed London's ability to deal effectively with all issues at the same time and compelled, naturally enough, the allocation of interest, priorities and resources.

It was at this juncture that the need for a solution to the Egyptian question became pressing. The way this issue was dealt with in London - whether by a preoccupied Cabinet or a changing Foreign Office - was necessarily different from the approach taken by the British in Cairo. This difference and the objective difficulties faced by the government in London left its mark on Egyptian policy and made its formulation a potential source of conflict between Cairo and London in the early post-war years.

The Context of Policy Formulation¹

The rapid demobilisation following the end of the war and the economic crisis

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1. 'The context of policy formulation' is similar to the term 'operational environment,' used to indicate the factors that determine the limits of possible effective action, while the 'psychological environment' deals with those factors, such as the perceptions, that affect the limits of possible decisions. Joseph Frankel, The Making of Foreign Policy: An Analysis of Decision Making (London, 1963), p.4.

of the early 1920's had an implicit impact on molding British policy towards Egypt. Although demobilisation and economics did not dictate specific policy, they had the subtler effect of conditioning policy makers and limiting the options open to them.

Demobilisation of the armed forces began immediately after armistice. As a result of almost mutinous discontent over the early release of late recruits, Winston Churchill at the War Office increased the rate in January 1919 to nearly 10,000 men a day for a period of six months.¹ Churchill planned to retain only 900,000 men out of the three and a half million in the Imperial Army. The army was being reduced to nearly its peacetime size, yet its commitments had increased in Silesia, the Rhine, Constantinople, Palestine, Iraq and especially Ireland. This imposed severe limitations on the course of action the government could take if the use of troops was required. The implications of this were recognised by Curzon who told the Imperial Conference in 1923 that 'the world knows only too well that when the war was over we disbanded our forces with almost undue alacrity.'²

The government's difficulties were also increased by the post-war economic crisis. By December 1921 the situation had become critical and severely strained the government's ability to maintain its costly commitments abroad. In answer to the growing call for the introduction of deflationary policies and for the reduction of public expenditure, the Geddes Committee on National Expenditure was struck to examine possible areas for economies.

The first two parts of the Committee's report were made public on February 10, 1922.³ The sharpest reductions were called for in the Services. The general effect of the Committee's recommendations was that they further limited the options available to the Cabinet if troops were required anywhere for the implementation of policy. For Egypt, the Geddes Committee recommended a reduction in the seven infantry battalions stationed there to six, and in the areas from which reinforcements could be quickly brought - Palestine and Malta - a reduction from a total

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1. The figures on demobilisation have been taken from Charles Loch Mowat, Britain Between the Wars, 1918-1940 (London, 1968), pp.22-3; Winston S. Churchill, The Aftermath, Vol. IV in The World Crisis (London, 1929), pp.53-6.
 2. Lawrence J.L.D. [Marquis of] Zetland, The Life of Lord Curzon (London, 1928), III, 242.
 3. The following is based primarily on the first two sections of the Geddes Report: Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers. Vol. IX (Reports from Commissioners, etc., Vol. III), (1922), [Cmd.-1581], 'First Interim Report of Committee on National Expenditure, December 14, 1921,' passim; and, ibid., [Cmd.-1582], 'Second Interim Report, January 28, 1922,' passim.

of six infantry battalions to three, and three cavalry battalions to two.¹

The report's implications for Egyptian policy were serious. The riots of March 1919 and May 1921 indicated that the British military establishment was adequate for normal garrison conditions but that it could not cope with serious disturbances. In fact, in October 1921, the Cabinet was advised by its military experts 'that in the event of an insurrection and of the Egyptian Army turning against us a reinforcement of 24 battalions would be necessary.'² Furthermore, the history of British rule since 1918 indicated that if an unpopular policy were adopted - such as the continuation of the Protectorate - it would have to be supported by bayonets. Economic conditions in Britain meant that these bayonets were no longer readily available in Cairo. This was impressed upon the Cabinet by the Geddes Committee only a few weeks before the confrontation with Allenby in February 1922 over Egypt's independence and no doubt left its mark on the government's ability to determine policy freely.

Another element affecting policy formulation for Egypt was government pre-occupation elsewhere. Pressing issues in unrelated areas meant that delay and poor coordination often characterised consideration of the Egyptian question. Either the problem was neglected because of more urgent business in other areas or it was given only cursory attention. In any event, what was crucial in Cairo was at times only of secondary importance to London. In addition, the diverse factors, such as departmental and imperial interests, that affected policy formulation by the British government played a far smaller role in the consideration of policy by the Residency in Cairo.

Delay over Egyptian policy became a common occurrence in the post-war era. One of the precipitating causes of the 1918-19 crisis was the refusal of the

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1. This reduction of cavalry forces affected Palestine as there was no cavalry in Malta. No changes were recommended in the one cavalry battalion in Egypt.
 2. Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 85(21), November 3, 1921, FO/371/6307. Considerations such as these led the British in Cairo to ask rhetorically: 'Are His Majesty's Government prepared to provide the means for carrying through the policy which insistence on their present major reservations [in the negotiations] entails?' Selby to Tyrrell, October 1, 1921, FO/371/6306. For similar comments, see: Scott [Acting High Commissioner] to Lindsay, September 20, 1921, FO/371/6305; and, Scott to Curzon, October 10, 1921, Desp. No. 882, FO/371/6306.

Foreign Office and the government to permit a ministerial delegation to come to London from Cairo. They were too preoccupied with preparations for the Peace Conference. Even after the outbreak of demonstrations in Egypt this tendency to delay consideration did not change. Wingate returned to London for consultations on February 3, 1919 but 'was not received by Lord Curzon - to discuss the Egyptian situation - till Monday the 17th.'¹ Allenby was no more fortunate in this respect and when in England in October 1920 he wrote to his wife that

I am still hanging around waiting to be interviewed by the Cabinet. So far I have received no summons. Now they will be busy with this coal strike, and will, I fear, have little time for other affairs.²

Another example of delay was the history of the Milner Mission. The suggestion to send a mission to Egypt 'to investigate existing conditions...hear every party and report on future form of our Protectorate' was made to Allenby on April 5, 1919.³ Although Allenby eventually concurred in the delay, the Mission only arrived in Egypt in December 1920 after the situation had seriously deteriorated. While some of the reasons given for the delay concerned Egypt, the others indicated the weight of non-Egyptian factors:

Slowness of restoration of order and good feeling in Egypt, possibility of boycott or bad reception of Mission if it arrived prematurely, unrest in Eastern world, and uncertainty as to decisions of Peace Conference, in respect both of Turkey and other Enemy Powers, are used as arguments for postponement to later period, when there may be greater stability in all these respects. It may also be difficult to get together representative and powerful mission in summer months.⁴

The manner in which the Cabinet dealt with the Mission's proposals is even more revealing. The proposals which called for an Anglo-Egyptian Treaty instead of the protectorate, were made public in August 1920. Yet on January 5, 1921, the Cabinet was urged by Winston Churchill not to take any substantive decision for another six months.⁵ This approach was difficult to understand in Cairo and often caused irritation among the British officials there who asked 'when will the

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1. Wingate Note (n.d.), SAD, Wingate Papers, 162/1.
 2. Allenby to Lady Allenby, October 7, 1920, Gardner, op.cit., pp.233-4. For other comments, see: Wavell, op.cit., p.53.
 3. Foreign Office to Allenby, April 5, 1919, Tel. No. 427, FO/371/3714.
 4. Curzon to Allenby, May 22, 1919, Private Tel., Curzon Papers, FO/800/153.
 5. Cabinet Decisions, January 5, 1921, FO/371/6292.

British Govt. appreciate the situation in Egypt? and learn that platitudes thrown at us here 30 years ago are not applicable now.¹

In addition to delay, there was also a lack of adequate machinery for the formulation of policy and the absence of clearly established procedures and central responsibility for its supervision.² Although the Foreign Office was theoretically responsible for Egyptian affairs, other departments such as the Colonial Office, the India Office and the War Office, had vested interests in the area. These were pressed vigorously inside and outside the Cabinet. The fact that there was no strictly enforced delimitation of authority resulted in an increase in inter-departmental rivalry. This became so sharp that at times there appeared to be an absence of unified policy.³

The activities of Winston Churchill were particularly important in this respect. Twice within six months as Colonial Secretary he publicly commented on the future status of Egypt in the most controversial terms. On the first occasion in February 1921, he referred to Egypt as being 'within the elastic circle of the British Empire.'⁴ This was before any decision had been reached on the Milner proposals regarding Egypt's future. On the second occasion he addressed the British Cotton Growing Association in Manchester shortly before the start of Anglo-Egyptian negotiations on Egypt's status. Churchill bluntly stated that he,

...did not think the time had yet come when the British armies should withdraw and be relegated to living on condensed water on the banks of the Suez Canal while the mobs of Cairo and Alexandria made short work of the European and foreign populations.⁵

This open encroachment on Foreign Office interests had an immediate effect on public opinion in Egypt and Curzon condemned Churchill because,

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1. E.S. Herbert Pasha to Wingate, December 4, 1919, SAD, Wingate Papers, 238/4.
 2. For an analysis of the effects of this on British policy, throughout the Middle East, see: Albert H. Hourani, Great Britain and the Arab World (London, 1946), p.19.
 3. For a description of divisions within the Cabinet over foreign policy, see: D.C. Watt, Personalities and Policies: Studies in the Formulation of British Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century (London, 1965), p.145.
 4. Times, February 14, 1921.
 5. Manchester Guardian, June 7, 1921.

...on two recent occasions you have made public references to the Egyptian question (which does not lie in your department) which were without Cabinet authority, which in each case have evoked an immediate response from Egypt, and which have rendered the already difficult task of the Foreign Secretary there more difficult.¹

These difficulties were increased by the seemingly haphazard manner in which decisions were reached or action was taken. For example, the circumstances surrounding the Milner Mission and its Report illustrate a marked lack of government coordination when dealing with Egypt. All the evidence indicates that the Report was written without reference to the Cabinet or even to Curzon. Bonar Law, a senior member of the Cabinet, wrote to Curzon that 'the whole of these Egyptian proposals came to me as a great shock.'² Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, noted in his diary on September 11, 1920

The P.M. turned to Egypt and asked Hardinge if Curzon knew anything about Milner's proposals for reform. Curzon, it appeared, had not been consulted nor had the P.M. nor B[onar]. L[aw]. nor Balfour.³

Curzon confirmed this at a meeting of the Imperial Cabinet in July 1921. He told the assembled Dominion leaders that 'I, myself, as Foreign Secretary, had only the dimmest idea of what was going on and I was a good deal surprised when I saw the [Milner] Conclusions in the form they ultimately assumed.'⁴ Even more serious in terms of the orderly management of Cabinet policy was the surprisingly irregular manner in which the proposals appear to have been made public in August 1920. Churchill, outraged by the absence of Cabinet approval, wrote to Lloyd George 'it is astonishing that they should have been let out to the press and the

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1. Curzon to Churchill, June 13, 1921, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/13/2/30. Even Lloyd George, no great admirer of Curzon, had to admit that such action was 'most improper and dangerous'. Lloyd George to Curzon, June 14, 1921, Lord Beaverbrook [W.M. Aitken], The Decline and Fall of Lloyd George: And Great Was the Fall Thereof (London, 1963), p.258. This support may have resulted from internal Cabinet intrigues. Lloyd George suspected Churchill of plotting against him with F.E. Smith and Beaverbrook, hence his unusual support of Curzon. Frances Stevenson noted Lloyd George's concern about this in her diary entry of January 20, 1921. A.J.P. Taylor (ed.), Lloyd George: A Diary by Frances Stevenson (London, 1971), p.223.
 2. Bonar Law to Curzon, August 20, 1920, BLL, Bonar Law Papers, 101/4/8.
 3. Thomas Jones, (Keith Middlemas, ed.) Whitehall Diaries, 1916-1925 (London, 1969), I, 121. This was confirmed by Duff Cooper's entry in his diary on August 23, 1920: Duff Cooper, op.cit., p.102; and, also Zetland, op.cit., III, 246.
 4. Stenographic Notes of a Meeting of Representatives of the United Kingdom, the Dominions and India, July 6, 1921, p.5, FO/371/6301.

public without the Cabinet having been consulted.'¹ As a result of this lack of coordination the British government found itself virtually committed to a course of action it had little influence in determining.²

The factors thus far mentioned had their origins basically in Britain. There were, however, other factors that derived from the state of the Empire in the post-war period. The position of the Dominions is a case in point. From the end of the nineteenth century British colonies with large European populations had a special standing.³ Participation in the war increased the Dominions' awareness of their importance to Britain. London's recognition of this gave them separate representation at the Peace Conference and shortly thereafter the right to negotiate and ratify treaties independently.

Towards the end of the war the role of the Dominions in policy formulation increased and eventually an expanded Imperial Cabinet was established serving as the forerunner of later Imperial Conferences.⁴ After the Chanak crisis of 1922 when the Dominions were nearly involved in a war in Anatolia, the calls for closer consultation increased and were heeded whenever possible. Such developments appear to have had an impact on the British government's operational freedom since it was

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1. Churchill to Lloyd George, August 26, 1920, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/9/2/41. Churchill later claimed this as justification for his unauthorised Manchester speech in June 1921. In reply to Curzon's condemnation of that speech, he wrote: 'So far as Egypt is concerned, I claim a greater liberty. The Milner report was made public in August last, I understand with your acquiescence, without the Cabinet being consulted in any way...' Churchill to Curzon, June 13, 1921, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/9/3/56.
 2. On July 11, 1921, Curzon observed in Cabinet 'that Lord Milner's Commission had so far prejudiced the situation, that the freedom of the Government in negotiation was severely hampered.' Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 58(21), July 11, 1921, FO/371/6301.
 3. For details of the development of the 'White' Dominions in this period, see: Paul Knaplund, Britain, Commonwealth and Empire, 1905-1955 (London, 1956), pp.51-9.
 4. For developments in this direction, see: Lloyd George to Walter Long (Colonial Office), December 12, 1916, cited in D.C. Watt, 'Imperial Defence Policy and Imperial Foreign Policy, 1911-1939, A Neglected Paradox?', Journ. of Commonwealth Pol. Stud., I, 4 (May, 1963), p.268; and Long to Balfour, October 9, 1917, Balfour Papers, FO/800/207. Imperialists accepted the growing influence of the Dominions and one leading figure, Egerton, wrote: 'The day is past when British colonial policy mainly depended upon tendencies at work in the Mother Country. At present it is as much, or even more, directed by the movement of thought regarding it in the great Dominions.' Hugh E. Egerton, British Colonial Policy in the Twentieth Century (London, 1922), p.21. See also, Watt, op.cit., p.266ff.

now necessary to take into account another appreciation of imperial interests based on a different constellation of political and geographical considerations.

Dominion concern in the area of Egyptian policy was related to specific interests. The one element that mitigated imperial influence on British policy was the fact that the interests in Egypt of countries like Australia and South Africa or New Zealand and Canada were not the same. Still Dominion views were another factor affecting the context of policy formulation. In the case of Australia and New Zealand for whom security in the Pacific against Japan was increasingly important, concern was great. Their leaders had a definite point of view on Egypt and pressed it in no uncertain terms. W.M. Hughes, the Prime Minister of Australia, cabled his view to Lloyd George on December 18, 1920. While admitting that the Commonwealth officially 'has no standing in the matter' of Egypt's independence, nonetheless, and in view of the importance of the Suez Canal, he entered the 'most emphatic protest [at] handing control of Egypt to those elements...already conspiring [sic] against the Empire.'¹

One curious sidelight at the sessions of the Imperial Cabinet in July 1921 also indicates the degree of British sensitivity to Dominion opinion. Massey, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, commented on Curzon's inability to present concrete proposals for the imminent Anglo-Egyptian negotiations. Curzon quickly retorted that, on the contrary, he could even circulate a draft treaty: 'I have drawn it up and I have got it.'² Duff Cooper at the Foreign Office, however, noted in his diary that he spent the entire evening after the session preparing the draft that Curzon had claimed was ready for circulation.³

The strength of the Dominion position, whether official or not, is further illustrated by the Imperial Cabinet proceedings in July 1921. Here Curzon attempted to defend British policy against the charge that there had been inadequate consultation on Egypt. Eventually it became necessary for the Prime Minister to intervene and promise that 'before we commit ourselves we are going to confer with the Dominion Premiers and the Representatives of India, and that is what we are here for.'⁴

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1. Hughes to Lloyd George, December 19, 1920, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/28/3/47.
 2. Stenographic Notes...July 6, 1921, p.11. FO/371/6301.
 3. Duff Cooper, op.cit., p.103.
 4. Stenographic Notes...July 6, 1921, p.15, FO/371/6301.

Egypt, India and Ireland

No discussion of the British government's difficulties in formulating policy towards Egypt would be complete without mention of the impact of the Irish 'troubles' and the Indian nationalist disturbances in the post-war years. On the most elementary level, the coincidence of these two crises with the developing Egyptian question strained the Cabinet's ability to give adequate attention simultaneously to three issues of such magnitude. Therefore, whether knowingly or not, there was an understandable allocation of priorities with the inevitable result that more Cabinet time was allotted to one question at the expense of another.

A simple comparison of the number of times Egypt, India and Ireland were discussed in Cabinet in the critical year of 1921 roughly indicates the relative level of interest in each issue.¹ During this year the Cabinet met ninety-three times. Egypt was discussed at eight meetings. Indian affairs were raised during twenty-four Cabinet sessions while Ireland was discussed on fifty-two separate occasions. Apparently the Egyptian question was considered either secondary when compared with India and Ireland or easier to resolve. In any case this resulted in a strikingly low level of Cabinet consideration and supervision of policy towards Egypt. Furthermore, the quality of Cabinet attention may well have suffered because whenever Egypt was considered, it was in conjunction with or contiguous to India or Ireland or both. During the second half of 1921, when negotiations were held with an Egyptian delegation from July 13 to November 19, there was surprisingly no appreciable change in this pattern of priorities. This may be explained by the fact that there were negotiations with an Irish delegation from October 11 to December 6. From July 11, when the Cabinet decided its position in the Egyptian negotiations, until December 31, Egypt was raised in Cabinet only five times, India twelve times and Ireland twenty-nine.²

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1. 1921 was chosen for this comparison since it was a critical period for all three issues. With regard to Egypt, it was the year in which the Milner proposals were considered, Anglo-Egyptians negotiations took place, and the conflict between Allenby and the Cabinet began. The comparison that follows is based on the table on p.38.
 2. An interesting indication of Egypt's level of importance is seen in the complete absence of any mention of the Egyptian crisis in the biography of Lloyd George by Thomas Jones, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet. Thomas Jones, Lloyd George (London, 1951), passim. For details of the government's preoccupation with Ireland during this period, see: Churchill, op.cit., IV, 277ff.

COMPARISON OF SELECTED CABINET TOPICS: JANUARY - DECEMBER 1921^a

Cabinet Meetings	Egypt	India	Ireland	Cabinet Meetings	Egypt	India	Ireland	Cabinet Meetings	Egypt	India	Ireland
1/21 ^b	x ^c	-	-	32/21	-	-	-	63/21	-	-	x
2/21	-	x	x	33/21	-	-	-	64/21	-	-	x
3/21	-	-	-	34/21	-	-	-	65/21	-	-	x
4/21	-	-	-	35/21	-	-	-	66/21	-	-	x
5/21	-	-	-	36/21	-	-	x	67/21	-	-	x
6/21	-	-	-	37/21	-	x	x	68/21	-	x	x
7/21	x	x	x	38/21	-	-	x	69/21	-	-	x
8/21	-	x	x	39/21	-	-	x	70/21	-	x	x
9/21	x	-	-	40/21	-	-	x	71/21	-	-	x
10/21	-	x	x	41/21	-	-	x	72/21	-	x	x
11/21	-	-	-	42/21	-	-	x	73/21	-	-	x
12/21	-	-	x	43/21	-	x	-	74/21	-	-	x
13/21	-	-	-	44/21	-	-	-	75/21	-	-	-
14/21	-	x	x	45/21	-	-	-	76/21	-	x	x
15/21	-	-	x	46/21	-	x	-	77/21	-	-	x
16/21	-	-	x	47/21	-	-	x	78/21	-	x	x
17/21	-	-	x	48/21	-	-	-	79/21	-	-	x
18/21	-	-	-	49/21	-	-	x	80/21	-	x	-
19/21	-	-	-	50/21	-	-	-	81/21	x	x	-
20/21	-	-	-	51/21	-	x	-	82/21	-	x	-
21/21	-	-	-	52/21	-	-	-	83/21	-	-	x
22/21	-	x	x	53/21	-	-	x	84/21	-	-	x
23/21	-	x	-	54/21	-	-	-	85/21	x	x	-
24/21	-	-	-	55/21	-	-	x	86/21	x	-	x
25/21	-	-	-	56/21	-	-	x	87/21	-	-	x
26/21	-	-	x	57/21	-	-	-	88/21	-	x	x
27/21	-	-	x	58/21	x	-	x	89/21	-	-	x
28/21	-	-	-	59/21	-	-	-	90/21	-	-	x
29/21	-	-	-	60/21	-	-	x	91/21	-	-	x
30/21	-	-	-	61/21	-	-	-	92/21	x	x	x
31/21	-	-	-	62/21	-	-	x	93/21	-	x	x

TOTALS: 8 24 52

a. This table is based on the Cabinet Decisions Index for 1921, PRO, CAB 23/28 (IND. 27766).

b. 1/21 is the designation for the first Cabinet session in 1921, 2/21 for the second, etc.

c. 'x' denotes the fact that this topic was discussed by the Cabinet.

Aside from distracting attention from policy towards Egypt, India and Ireland had the more direct effect of indicating possible avenues of approach or precluding others. In the case of India, another 'Oriental' area troubled by nationalism, it was believed that 'like cause must produce like effect.'¹ Also, since Egypt and India were generally seen in the same context and because of the large Muslim minority in the latter, events in the one were assumed to have ramifications in the other.

The common approach towards Egypt and India is seen in the attitude towards the problem of nationalism - perceived as the root cause of Britain's difficulties in both countries. A member of the Indian Civil Service described this as follows:

...we reasoned that Nationalism in both countries was nothing more than the heated rhetoric of a small talkative minority whose claims to represent the people were derived from nobody and whose theories fell on indifferent and even unwilling ears.²

When disturbances occurred in both regions in 1919, there was a tendency to assume that the 'connection between Indian and Egyptian troubles seems one of more or less common causes not of common instigation.'³

The acceptance of this approach was widespread in government circles. The Prime Minister, when outlining his views on Egypt to the Cabinet on November 4, 1921, stated that 'broadly our attitude should be that which we had adopted towards India.'⁴ In this he was supported by Curzon, on whom the influence of India was particularly strong, and who saw even the particulars of a solution to the Egyptian question in Indian terms and experiences. When advocating a treaty with Egypt instead of the protectorate, Curzon saw this as a 'subordinate alliance' similar to those concluded with 'the Indian Princes a century ago.'⁵

Some of the concrete measures taken in defining a policy also indicate the basic community of approach. In many respects the Milner Mission resembled the

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1. Stanley Rice, ICS ret., 'Egypt and India: A Comparison,' Asiatic Rev., XVII, (January, 1921), p.42.
 2. Ibid., p.35.
 3. Foreign Department, Simla to GOC, Cairo, April 29, 1919, Tel. No. 508-S, FO/141/521(8984).
 4. Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 86(21), November 4, 1921, FO/371/6307.
 5. Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, February 14, 1921, FO/371/6295.

Montagu-Chelmsford Mission sent to India to investigate constitutional reform there. Although such a mission was not unprecedented, they shared the common aim of ostensibly 'setting the feet of an Oriental people on the path of self-Government.'¹ Even the findings of these two missions in the area of the devolution of authority to local institutions, were superficially similar.²

The second aspect of the influence of the British experience in India on Egyptian policy was the assumed interaction of events in the two countries, a belief that was particularly strong during the 1914-18 war. This was based on the existence of a large Muslim minority in the Indian sub-continent, believed to be influenced by events in the Middle East, and on the traditional strategic and political interests of the Government of India in that region. This inter-relationship was acknowledged during the search for suitable personnel for the Foreign Office Egyptian Section. At the time, Hardinge, the Permanent Under-Secretary, wrote that 'it would be of advantage to have as Assistant an official from the Indian Office, who would keep the Dept^t in very close touch with the India Office.'³

The belief that events in Egypt affected India and the reverse was accepted by the advocates as well as opponents of a 'liberal' policy. As early as December 28, 1919, Milner wrote to Curzon from Egypt that the independence movement in Egypt 'will exercise a disturbing influence'⁴ on the British position in the entire Near East and in India and, therefore, policy should be coordinated. Curzon alluded to this relationship when he protested against Allenby's moderate policy in April 1919 because this will 'have a repercussion that will extend far beyond the borders of Egypt and make itself felt in every oriental country for which we are responsible.'⁵ Opponents of a liberal solution, such as Churchill, also based opposition to the Milner proposals on their ramifications elsewhere.⁶ The acceptance of a link

1. Chirol, op.cit., p.261.
2. Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Vol. , (Reports from Commissioners, etc., Vol. VIII), (1919), [C.-9109], 'Joint Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms,' passim. Interestingly, Curzon originally described the Mission to Egypt as 'a mission somewhat like Montagu's to India.' Curzon to Balfour, March 29, 1919, Balfour Papers, FO/800/215.
3. Hardinge to Robert Cecil, August 20, 1918, BM, Balfour Papers, add.49478.
4. Milner to Curzon, December 28, 1919, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/39/1/52.
5. Curzon to Balfour, April 3, 1919, Tel. Confidential, Balfour Papers, FO/800/216.
6. A remark to this effect was made by Churchill to Montagu on November 4, 1920 and was noted by Cooper in his diary. Cooper, loc.cit.

between Egypt and India was not restricted to the government but gained currency in the press and strengthened the tendency to view Egypt in extra-regional terms.¹ This approach was further supported by the current trend to view the non-Dominion sections of the Empire in a unitary frame of reference.

The final and perhaps most serious difficulty faced by the government was the Irish question. The immediate impact of the Irish 'troubles' and the agreement concluded on December 6, 1921 establishing the Irish Free State was to create a political atmosphere in which it might be unwise to grant similar concessions to Egypt. The Cabinet had already been weakened by the retirement of the ailing Bonar Law in May 1921. The absence of this powerful figure from the government front benches was a potential threat to the Coalition.² Bonar Law's recovery and return to London in September 1921, as events in Ireland and Egypt were reaching a crucial stage, weakened the government's political position. He now hovered outside the government, an alternative figure to whom dissatisfied Unionists might turn if Lloyd George and the Coalition faltered.³ Churchill later commented that the 'Irish Treaty and its circumstances were unforgivable by the most tenacious elements in the Conservative Party.'⁴

This growing uncertainty at a time when the Cabinet was considering its Egyptian policy meant that the government had to keep 'one eye upon Conservative constituencies'⁵ lest serious offence be given. J.A. Spender, the Liberal editor of the Westminster Gazette and a member of the Milner Mission, afterwards wrote critically of what he saw as the Coalition's fears that a 'surrender to Egyptian nationalists' might be coupled with the Irish settlement by the government's Tory

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1. For example, the Observer maintained in its editorial comment that waiting for the pressure of events to force concessions in Egypt 'would be a fatal encouragement to the working of Indian extremism.' Observer, February 12, 1922.
 2. Robert Blake, The Unknown Prime Minister: The Life and Times of Andrew Bonar Law, 1858-1923 (London, 1955), p.424; and, Mowat, op.cit., p.11.
 3. Of the 484 Members of Parliament who supported the Coalition, there were 338 Conservatives, 136 Liberals, and 10 Labour and other supporters. Ibid., p.6.
 4. Leopold M.S. Amery, My Political Life (London, 1953-55), II, 231. Amery was a Conservative junior minister at the time. Also, see: [F.W. Smith], Earl of Birkenhead, FE, The Life and Times of F.E. Smith, First Earl of Birkenhead (London, 1959), pp.353ff. Also, see: Churchill, op.cit., IV, 307.
 5. Daily News, February 10, 1922.

supporters.¹ The fears that a liberal solution to the Egyptian problem would be considered a betrayal were kept alive by the imperialist elements of the press. The Daily Express, in particular, maintained an active campaign against concessions throughout the period leading to Egypt's independence.² Although the unorganised efforts of individual Members of Parliament or a limited press campaign could not force the adoption of a specific policy, they could have the effect of prescribing to some extent the limits within which policy was formulated.

Another aspect of Ireland's influence on British policy towards Egypt was the tremendous fear of once again becoming embroiled in 'troubles' because of a mistaken decision and having to bear the consequent cost in human and material resources. The psychological atmosphere engendered by the civil war in Ireland meant that everything - events, leaders and even institutions in Egypt - were seen in Irish terms. This was true at every level of the government from Cabinet Minister to Foreign Office officials, as well as every shade of the press.

This factor influenced those concerned with Egyptian policy from the Milner Mission through the declaration of Egypt's independence. Milner already in Egypt wrote to Curzon on January 12, 1920 that, if British policy was not effective, he feared 'it will be something like the Irish situation all over again.'³ Curzon dreaded the same possibility when it became evident in October 1921 that the Egyptian negotiations were deadlocked. He wrote to his wife that 'I am sure we shall have an absolute rupture with another Ireland in Egypt.'⁴ H.A.L. Fisher, the President of the Board of Education and a member of the Cabinet's Egypt Sub-Committee, took the analogy with Ireland even further when he wrote that 'All I am concerned with is to send Redmond [Adli] back with a good offer for fear that we may have to deal with a Michael Collins [Zaghlul]'.⁵ Zaghlul Pasha and the nationalist movement in Egypt were seen in a similar light by the Prime Minister's closest aide, Philip Kerr, who wrote that he tried to convince Adli to accept the British proposals for fear that 'Zaghlul will go Sinn Fein...Zaghlul will begin

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1. J.A. Spender, Life, Journalism and Politics (London, 1927), II, 99.
 2. The Express was the most vocal in linking an Egyptian settlement with the Irish one. When Allenby returned to London in early 1922, the Express commented on his proposals: 'What terms should we have got out of Ireland under those [Allenby's] conditions? The same as we are likely to get out of Egypt. Lord Allenby carries his point - NONE.' Daily Express, February 9, 1922.
 3. Milner to Curzon, January 12, 1920, BLO, Milner Papers, Box 162.
 4. Curzon to Lady Curzon, October 21, 1921, in Zetland, op.cit., III, 248.
 5. Fisher to Lloyd George, October 28, 1921, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/16/7/72.

to create a Pan-Islamic-Sinn Fein machine.'¹ Finally, in writing of the risks of a repressive policy even John Murray and Duff Cooper of the Foreign Office Egyptian Section resorted to the Irish metaphor and worried that 'we might end by creating another Ireland without an Ulster, which would be a storm centre in the Mediterranean and a perpetual menace to the Suez Canal.'² The press was equally alive to the Irish analogies and Egypt was constantly referred to as 'that other Ireland'.³ Demonstrations became the precursors of an oriental version of the 'troubles', and in 1922 a leader was sought who might become 'Egypt's Michael Collins'.⁴

The cumulative effects of Ireland's influence left the British government on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, the political pressures precluded the easy acceptance of a compromise solution in Egypt. On the other hand, the fears of a recurrence of the 'troubles' worked in the direction of a conciliatory solution.

The Foreign Office and Curzon

The role of the Foreign Office, directly responsible for Egyptian affairs, was extremely important. The Office's position, interests and structure set it apart from the British establishment in Cairo. This was particularly significant in view of the increased authority of the High Commissioner and the Residency in the early post-war years.

Although the Cabinet as a whole approved general policy, it was the responsibility of the Foreign Office to formulate and recommend, through the Secretary of State, specific policy on foreign affairs and to oversee its implementation. The situation, however, was not static. The relations between the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, between other ministries and the Foreign Office, depended as

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1. Kerr to Lloyd George, October 28, 1921, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/32/2/9.
 2. Memorandum by A. Duff Cooper and John Murray, October 14, 1921, FO/371/6305.
 3. Manchester Guardian, January 2, 1922.
 4. Daily News, February 3, 1922. The labour movement also adopted this terminology. The Egypt Parliamentary Committee presented the Labour Party Conference in June 1921 with a tract entitled Another Ireland (Text in: FO/371/6298), while the Daily Herald, January 13, 1922, reported that 'the formation of an Egyptian Dail is a new possibility of the political situation.'

much on personalities and circumstances as they did on constitutional theory and practice.¹ This was very much the case in the war years and immediately afterwards. At the same time that Cairo was becoming a rival focus of power, the Foreign Office was undergoing a period of transition and a relative decline in influence.

The change in the position and structure of the Foreign Office began with its pre-war re-organisation and continued in the early war years under the then Secretary of State Sir Edward Grey. Given the nature of wartime decisions and the presence of powerful figures such as Kitchener, Churchill and Lloyd George in the Service Ministries and Treasury, the Foreign Office did not enjoy an unchallenged position in foreign affairs. Eventually, it shared much of its authority with the War Office and Admiralty, functioning primarily in a technical and advisory capacity. This trend was confirmed when Lloyd George became Prime Minister in 1916 and the War Cabinet of Six was established to the exclusion of Arthur Balfour, the Foreign Secretary.²

The difference in age and temperament between Lloyd George and the older Balfour accelerated the decline of the Foreign Office position. Balfour felt that the Prime Minister had a right to intervene in the management of foreign relations and willingly gave 'a free hand for the Little Man.'³ Organisational change in the government also contributed to the diminution of Foreign Office authority. The re-organisation of the War Cabinet Secretariat gave it wide powers of liaison and responsibility for memoranda and papers relevant to the Cabinet's activities, including foreign affairs.

The establishment of the Prime Minister's private secretariat in the garden of his official residence was also an important development. The 'Garden Suburb' or the 'Downing Street Kindergarten', as it was known, became the means by which the Prime Minister was kept informed of all matters pertaining to the war effort

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1. Leon Epstein, 'British Foreign Policy,' in R.C. Macridis (ed.), Foreign Policy in World Politics (Englewood Cliffs, N. Jer., 1958), p.15; and, Ronald G. Bishop, The Administration of British Foreign Relations (Syracuse, 1961), pp.3-5, 134, 160; also, Zara Steiner, Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, (Cambridge, 1969), passim.
 2. According to Balfour's niece and biographer, this did not diminish his authority since he could attend Cabinet meetings whenever he wished. This does not, however, take into account the effects of formal exclusion. Blanche E.C. Dugdale, Arthur James Balfour, First Earl of Balfour, K.G., O.M., F.R.S. (London, 1936), II, 241-2.
 3. Idem.

and through which he could circumvent normal departmental channels. The private secretariat and its leading figure, Philip Kerr, were particularly resented by the officials of the Foreign Office where it was believed that they assisted Lloyd George in concentrating the management of foreign affairs in his own hands.¹

Finally, the position of the Foreign Office was under increasing attack by those radical elements outside Whitehall who wished to curtail the authority of a Service called by John Bright 'a gigantic system of outdoor relief for the aristocracy.' The claims about the nefarious role of 'secret diplomacy' and 'balance of power' policies in the outbreak of the war, were the occasion for this campaign.² This led to the establishment of the Union of Democratic Control (UDC) whose chief aim was to impose parliamentary restraints on the hitherto secret activities of the diplomatist. The acrimonious debates about the evils of the 'old diplomacy', the popularity of President Wilson's 'open diplomacy', and the horrors of the 1914-18 war all contributed to public misgivings about the position and functions of the Foreign Office. While their efforts can never be measured accurately, there seems little doubt that they contributed to the environment in which the Foreign Office was undergoing serious change.

The end of the war and the shift of government interest to the diplomatic sphere emphasised the subtler changes of previous years. Lloyd George now had wider scope for individual activity. As a result of his relationship with Balfour,

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1. Lord Hardinge, former Permanent Under Secretary of State at the Foreign Office and then Ambassador to France. Cited in Hardinge, op.cit., p.180. For example, Kerr was the British representative on the Committee of Three that considered the question of the Rhine as Germany's border. James Ramsay Butler, Lord Lothian, 1882-1940 (London, 1960), p.71. Kerr also drafted Article XXII of the League of Nations Charter that dealt with mandates. Robert Cecil to Lloyd George, April 4, 1921, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/6/6/64.
 2. E.D. Morel's Morocco in Diplomacy (London, 1912) was the earliest revelation of the 'sins' of secret diplomacy. Morel was one of the founders of the Union of Democratic Control (UDC) which was strongly supported by the Labour Party leadership. For a description of the post-war criticism of 'old diplomacy' and the difference between that and 'new diplomacy', see: Harold Nicolson, Curzon, the Last Phase: A Study in Post-War Diplomacy (London, 1934), pp.51, 184ff. For details of the attack on the Foreign Office and its effects, see: G.A. Craig, 'The British Foreign Office from Grey to Austen Chamberlain,' in G.A. Craig and F. Gilbert (edd.), The Diplomats, 1919-1939 (Princeton, 1953), pp.17-25.

the nature of post-war diplomacy and the general public atmosphere, Lloyd George introduced a highly personal form of conference diplomacy. Thomas Jones of the Cabinet Secretariat described the results: 'He personalized and dramatized foreign affairs for the newly enfranchised millions.'¹ Although this may well have been done, it did little to allay Foreign Office fears at what appeared to be a dramatic loss of position and authority. It was at this juncture and under these circumstances that Lord Curzon became the Acting Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs later receiving his appointment on October 28, 1919.

Curzon's arrival at the Foreign Office was greeted by the expectation that he would restore its position and give firm direction to foreign policy. Based on his experience as Salisbury's Under-Secretary from 1895-1898 and his term as Viceroy of India from 1898 to 1905, this was understandable. Curzon's expertise in foreign and especially Eastern affairs was a commonplace. In addition, his outwardly imposing personality, the object of much humour,² supported the belief that the authority of the Foreign Office would soon be increased. This impression, however, was mistaken and there was little change in its position under Curzon. The fact that this paralleled the rise in Cairo's position was extremely important.

When Curzon assumed office he was bitter and often sick. In fact his health was at times so poor that it became necessary to have Balfour return to the Foreign Office temporarily in mid-1922 while Curzon convalesced. Aside from obvious physical difficulties, Curzon still bore the marks of 'those ten years of mortification'³ that followed his resignation in India. Throughout his five years at the Foreign Office he was ill and torn between 'the peace and freedom of retirement'⁴ and the goad of the everpresent ambition to end his career as Prime Minister regardless of the cost. As Beaverbrook, an unsympathetic observer described it, 'his passion to become Prime Minister outstripped every other emotion in his

1. Jones, op.cit., p.179.

2. One example was the incident when Curzon, upon seeing British soldiers bathing, asked 'How is it that I have never been informed that the lower orders have such white skins?' Ronald Blythe, The Age of Illusions: England in the Twenties and Thirties (London, 1963), p.8. For other tales, some apocryphal, see: Nicolson, op.cit., pp.44-8; and, Zetland, op.cit., III, 206.

3. Nicolson, op.cit., p.31.

4. Curzon to Sir George Cunningham, May 29, 1921, Zetland, op.cit., III, 254.

chequered career. He would bite at any hook baited with hope of the highest office.'¹

The situation that had existed under Balfour continued under Curzon. Foreign Office officials complained that they had little real authority and that 'they are not kept informed and do not themselves know what the Government's point of view is.'² Unlike Balfour, Curzon deeply resented Lloyd George's intervention in foreign affairs and on one occasion complained to his wife that, 'Girlie, I am getting very tired of working or trying to work with that man. He wants his For. Sec. to be a valet almost a drudge and he has no regard for the conveniences or civilities of official life.'³

Curzon's inability to hold his ground against Lloyd George diminished not only the effectiveness of the Foreign Office but also his position within the Cabinet. His colleagues were soon convinced that he 'would swallow anything rather than relinquish,'⁴ and thus firm advocacy of a particular policy by Curzon invariably rang false. The effects on Curzon were serious and after one meeting, Austen Chamberlain, Chancellor of the Exchequer, wrote that he had 'found him very depressed & disturbed in mind, uneasy about his position, doubtful of his usefulness & influence.'⁵ Curzon was depressed because of his 'feeling that the Prime Minister had more than once treated him with scant courtesy - almost with contumely - in the presence of his colleagues.'⁶ Whether Curzon refused to resign because of his sense of duty or because he feared the oblivion that might once again follow resignation, is

1. Beaverbrook, op.cit., p.45.

2. George Allardice Riddell, Lord Riddell's Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and After, 1918-1923 (London, 1933), p.193.

3. Curzon to his wife, April 22, 1922. Beaverbrook, op.cit., p.251. Also on the occasion of Lloyd George's appearance at the Genoa Conference alone, Curzon bitterly wrote: 'I hope that this will be the last of these fantastic gatherings which are really designed as a stage on which he is to perform.' Nicolson, op.cit., p.245. There has been much debate as to whether Lloyd George usurped Foreign Office prerogatives or stepped into the vacuum created by weak leadership at that ministry. The latter, 'revisionist', view has been put forward most notably by Professor M.G. Fry in his work on Lloyd George's foreign policy. M.G. Fry, The Education of a Statesman, Vol. I in Lloyd George and Foreign Policy, 1890-1945 (Toronto, 1976).

4. Nicolson, op.cit., p.33

5. J. Austen Chamberlain to Bonar Law, January 6, 1921, BLL, Bonar Law Papers, 100/1/8.

6. Idem.

unimportant here. What is important is that much of his intellect and forcefulness was wasted often because of his inability to make a decision or to press a decision with the necessary vigour.

The one field where Curzon might have provided a measure of effective leadership was in Eastern affairs¹ because of his reputation and the fact that the East, with the exception of the Greco-Turkish conflict, had a low priority in Cabinet interest. However, here his own views and not extra-departmental interference prevented him from giving flexible and realistic direction to policy. Curzon, like his colleagues, was the product of a Victorian environment. This background determined his attitudes towards the world and Britain's place in it. Curzon's later experiences in India only reinforced those attitudes. His views were by no means unique but rather represented the consensus. This too, no doubt, had a reinforcing effect.

Curzon's approach in 1919 to the role of Great Britain had not altered visibly since he had earlier dedicated his Problems of the Far East to 'those who believe that the British Empire is, under Providence, the greatest instrument for good that the world has ever seen.'² Such imperialism appeared to be tempered with an amalgam of duty and service. Montagu, at the India Office, more cynically believed that Curzon's views had their basis in national self-interest alone and wrote to Balfour in a parody of Curzon's style:

And then there is the rounded Lord Curzon, who for historical reasons of which he alone is master, geographical considerations which he has peculiarly studied, finds reluctantly, much against his will, with very grave doubts, that it would be dangerous if any country in the world was left to itself, if any country in the world was left to the control of any other country but ourselves, and we must go there, as I have heard him say, 'for diplomatic, economic, strategic and telegraphic reasons.'³

Whichever was the basis of Curzon's imperial view, it had the same result: an inability to grasp the nature of post-war changes. But then very few of his colleagues were any more far-sighted. Time had stood still for Curzon and, reflecting

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1. This refers to those Eastern areas which came within the province of the Foreign Office, such as Egypt and Persia, but not the mandated countries which after 1921 were the responsibility of the Colonial Office.
 2. George Nathaniel Curzon, Problems of the Far East (London, 1894).
 3. Edwin Montagu to Balfour, December 20, 1918, BM, Balfour Papers, add. 49748.

the consensus, he 'dreamt of creating a chain of vassal states stretching from the Mediterranean to the Pamirs and protecting, not the Indian frontiers merely, but our communications with our further frontiers.'¹ An approach that viewed the world solely in terms of protecting India's borders and excluded all factors other than the safety of imperial communications, prevented the formulation of a flexible policy. One need only look at the humiliating aftermath of the 1919 Anglo-Persian Treaty, for which Curzon proudly bore sole responsibility, in order to see the consequences of this imperial view. A leader who, after the war and its cost to Britain, could still think that 'the British flag has never flown over a more powerful or more united empire',² was hardly capable of formulating a flexible and realistic policy even in his own sphere of interest - the East.

With regard to Egypt, Curzon's pre-war imperial outlook, oriented towards Persia and India, created serious difficulties. It was obviously impossible for him to comprehend fully the nature of wartime changes in that country. In addition, since the basis of Curzon's approach differed from that of the local British establishment, a divergence of views on the solution to the Egyptian problem would eventually develop. These differences, coming as they did when the position of the British in Cairo was rising, left their resolution open to serious question.

There were also several specific factors that affected the management of Egyptian affairs and policy. Until the post-war period there was no organised body of experienced officials upon whom the Foreign Secretary could call for advice on Egyptian matters.³ As a result of wartime administrative difficulties within Egypt and the absence of any unit of the Foreign Office that could deal with them in an organised fashion, the question of a special 'Egyptian Department' was raised. The increasing complexity of Egyptian affairs gave rise to the feeling that 'the tide of war has rolled towards the Middle East & East, and it is undeniable that the situation in these quarters of the world requires closer attention than was the case a year ago.'⁴

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1. Nicolson, op.cit., p.121.
 2. Curzon, November 18, 1918 in 5 Parliamentary Debates (Lords), XXXII (1918), [*italics mine* - E.R.]
 3. For contemporary criticism of this situation and a comparison with conditions in the India Office, see: Chirol, Egyptian Problem..., p.207ff.
 4. Hardinge to Robert Cecil, August 20, 1918, BM, Balfour Papers, add. 49748.

It was to deal with these aspects of the Egyptian question that the Egyptian Administration Committee was constituted in 1917 by the War Cabinet under Curzon's chairmanship. Although it was decided that a department to deal specifically with Egypt should be established in the Foreign Office, this was not implemented until after the war. Furthermore, the very principle of Foreign Office control of Egyptian affairs was in question and during the war there had been a serious attempt to detach Egypt from its supervision.¹

The establishment of the Egyptian Section within the Foreign Office Eastern Department did contribute somewhat to the rationalisation of control and policy. It did not, however, lay to rest the question of final departmental responsibility. As late as 1921, Churchill, when accepting responsibility for Middle Eastern affairs within the Colonial Office, proposed to Lloyd George that Egypt, 'unless she ceases to be administratively controlled by Great Britain,' should be a Colonial Office responsibility.² Curzon secured a decision in his favour in February 1921 and wrote his wife:

...Then Cabinet 12-2, rather a long and worrying controversy between Winston & myself over the Middle East. He wants to grab everything into his new Dept., & to be a sort of Asiatic Forn. Secretary. I absolutely declined to agree to this, & the P.M. took my side. But it was not fighting while it lasted.³

Although Churchill's claim was defeated it was not destroyed and created bitterness in the Cabinet. Beaverbrook later claimed that 'Many years after Churchill told me that he would have succeeded in seizing Egypt from Curzon's clutches if the Government had lived a little longer.'⁴

After serious difficulties in finding qualified personnel, the Middle East Section was organised in 1919.⁵ It dealt with Egyptian affairs as they referred to the Foreign Office and, in the crucial period leading up to Egypt's independence,

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1. For details of this episode which occurred while Wingate was in Egypt, see: Terry, op.cit., pp.128-31.
 2. Churchill to Lloyd George, January 4, 1921, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/9/2/51.
 3. Curzon to his wife, February 14, 1921. Beaverbrook, op.cit., p.41.
 4. Ibid., p.40.
 5. For details of these difficulties, see: Hardinge to Robert Cecil, August 20, 1918, BM, Balfour Papers, add. 49748. T. Loyd was the first head of the Egyptian Department until his resignation in July 1919. For details of his service, see: Graham to Allenby, June 11, 1919, FO/141/436(7568/6).

consisted of three officials: John R. Murray, A. Duff Cooper¹ and E.M.B. Ingram. Only Murray had any real experience in Egypt. He had been a member of the Egyptian civil service for fourteen years and, before coming to London to head the Egyptian Section, was Acting Secretary General at the Ministry of Finance. Duff Cooper and Ingram were relatively inexperienced. The former came from the Foreign Office Commercial Department and the latter had been the Assistant Secretary to the Milner Mission. Other officials who dealt with Egypt during most of Allenby's service there were Sir Ronald Lindsay, the Assistant Under Secretary of State, responsible for Eastern affairs, and Sir Eyre Crowe, the Permanent Under Secretary of State from 1920 until his death in 1925. Of the two, only Lindsay had extensive knowledge of the area, having served once as the powerful Acting Financial Adviser to the Egyptian government.

On the ordinary day-to-day level of Egyptian affairs there are indications that 'Murray, being expert on the subject, was little interfered with by the higher authorities who were inclined to accept his opinions.'² However, on the larger issues of policy - precisely where Allenby's advisers carried so much weight - there were acknowledged limits to the manner in which staff such as Murray or even Lindsay could deal with them. Thus the organisational position of the Foreign Office 'Egyptian' staff was relatively limited when compared to their counterparts in Cairo. The only occasion when 'specialist' staff did enjoy extensive influence and authority was when a Foreign Secretary was particularly inexperienced in the relevant area and therefore leaned heavily on his advisers for assistance.³ In the case of Curzon and Eastern affairs, there was the definite assumption of expertise, both on his part and on the part of his aides.

Curzon's general approach to his role within the Foreign Office is a further indication of some of the limitations placed on his assistants. Curzon's position within the Foreign Office was the reverse of that in the Cabinet and he attempted to concentrate departmental activity in his own hands as far as possible. According to contemporary testimony, he generally found it difficult to delegate work to others. Vansittart, one of Curzon's secretaries, noted that 'when I wrote memoranda for him, he would go through the back papers to be sure that I had not made

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1. A. Duff Cooper, later Viscount Norwich, left the Foreign Office in February 1922.
 2. Duff Cooper, op.cit., p.99.
 3. Frankel, op.cit., pp.28-30.

a mistake.'¹ Another secretary, Pembroke Wicks, later commented that Curzon 'kept a duplicate set of Cabinet papers and other official documents at Carlton House Terrace, handling and sorting them and not using his secretaries.'² This only reinforced existing limitations and the contrast with Allenby's staff is quite remarkable.

Finally, the domestic environment naturally influenced officials dealing with Egypt in London. Career officials in the Foreign Office were relatively isolated from the pressures of domestic politics. However, while they may have been protected against immediate political pressures, their very existence within the domestic environment meant they could not avoid *absorbing* its attitudes and values to a far greater extent than was true of British officials active in the isolated and foreign environment of Egypt. Also, the very proximity of the Foreign Office home establishment to the political leadership increased their awareness of the domestic political factors limiting Cabinet options. The advice that was tendered by these officials invariably and correctly took these factors into consideration and directed their approach to Egyptian policy. This element, however, was obviously less important for the British officials in Cairo.

Thus a tangled skein of interests, pressures and different structures created the context of potential differences ^{of opinion} between London and Cairo. This affected the methods of dealing with Egypt as well as the approach to policy formulation. With the emergence of Cairo and London's increasing pre-occupation elsewhere, not only was the potential for disagreement present, but also Cairo had the power to pursue those differences. The future direction of Britain's policy towards Egypt meant that the willingness of Allenby and his staff to make use of their authority as a rival focus of power would inevitably lead to such disagreement.

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1. Lord [Robert Gilbert] Vansittart, The Mist Procession: The Autobiography of Lord Vansittart (London, 1958), p.254.
 2. Jones, Whitehall Diaries, I, 239. In his entry for June 4, 1921, Jones, the Cabinet Secretary, described a meeting with Pembroke Wicks, one of Curzon's private secretaries. Wicks, a barrister, complained that he had had nothing to do for two months except for being 'charged with the keeping of C.'s domestic accounts for his various houses, paying servants' wages, etc.' Idem.

CHAPTER THREE: SHARED PERCEPTIONS - THE MOTIFS OF POLICY

From the start of the occupation of Egypt in 1882 British policy was based on the conviction that the interests of Britain and the Empire were linked inextricably with Egypt. The Suez Canal, which lay at the crossroads of imperial communications, was seen by Englishman and foreigner alike as 'the spinal cord which connects the backbone and the brain' of Britain.¹ Once this was accepted as axiomatic, the next stage was the construction of a policy which would ensure Britain's interests against native 'irresponsibility' and European 'meddling'.

The development of such a policy and its elaboration in the early twentieth century to meet altered circumstances required more than a simple awareness of self-interest. It involved an entire network of myths, beliefs, attitudes and prejudices, or in other words, a perceptual view of Egypt and its inhabitants, and the relationship of England and the Englishman to Egypt and the Egyptian. This became the psychological environment which, together with Britain's given interests and existing circumstances, largely conditioned the atmosphere in which policy was determined.

The bases of the British perceptions of Egypt may well be called the leit-motifs of policy. These were the various elements which consistently ran through the opinions and judgments of those Englishmen concerned with or affected by the formulation and execution of policy throughout the Anglo-Egyptian connection. These opinions and judgments in turn affected the more complex approaches to policy.

Motifs and Mythology of Policy

One of the most important elements in the overall British view of Egypt was a tradition of paternalism. A system which engendered 'the habit of authority'² in one class and its acceptance by the other classes was transposed to a new context with Britain's acquisition of overseas possessions and with the need to impose a system of or an attitude towards policy.

There were two distinct aspects to paternalism in British administration in the

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1. Bismarck to Dr. Moritz Busch, in a conversation on June 8, 1882, in M. Busch, Bismarck. Some Secret Pages of His History (New York, 1928), II, 322.
 2. A.P. Thornton, The Habit of Authority: Paternalism in British History (London, 1966), passim.

nineteenth century. The one, based on the utilitarian evangelism of Bentham, Cobden and Christian Non-Conformism of mid-Victorian England, was the reflection of an impulse to do good. Ethical concepts such as honour and mission played an important part in the belief that government, 'fired by moral zeal, could shape a society.' No society could be more malleable, in British eyes, than the Eastern one and it was sentiments such as these that infused the early reformers of Egypt with such enthusiasm for the lot of the fallah.

The development of social and political Darwinism added a new dimension and complemented the earlier tradition of 'station'. In mid-Victorian England, an advanced industrial society, the capacity for enterprise was the measure of a people's place within the hierarchy of nations.¹ With the British both determining and wielding the yardstick, it was inevitable that Britain be at the summit and the inhabitants of the East far below. These two elements were clearly present in the British approach to Egypt and, while not antipodean, coexisted only uneasily. But in time the ethical and hierarchical aspects of paternalism developed along separate and somewhat different lines.

Cromer ably synthesised the early view of what the Englishman ought to do in Egypt and his capacity to do this:

The special aptitude shown by Englishmen in the government of Oriental races pointed to England as the most effective and beneficent instrument for the gradual introduction of European civilisation into Egypt.²

However, by the end of the 1914-18 war the strongly ethical content of England's paternalist impulse in Egypt largely disappeared. The need to protect threatened strategic interests in Egypt meant that ethical abstractions such as mission and duty became far less tenable. While Churchill could still write in 1921 that

I am not at all prepared to sit still and mute and watch the people of this country being slowly committed to the loss of this great and

1. Robinson and Gallagher, op.cit., p.2.

2. Earl of Cromer [Sir Evelyn Baring], Modern Egypt (London, 1908), I, 328. Elsewhere Cromer wrote: 'What should be the profession of faith of a sound but reasonable Imperialist?....He will believe that, in the treatment of subject races, the methods of government practised by England, though sometimes open to legitimate criticism are superior, morally and economically, to those of any other nation...' Earl of Cromer, 'The Government of Subject Races' in Political and Literary Essays 1908-1913 (London, 1913-16), I, 4.

splendid monument of British administration, skill and energy,¹

such language was largely confined to veteran foreign officials in Egypt who could be forgiven their atavisms.

More and more those responsible for policy towards Egypt began to think that it might be necessary for Britain to abandon 'the solicitude we have displayed for 40 years for the orderly conduct of Egyptian Domestic affairs' and contemplate the possibility of what would happen if the 'Egyptians...demonstrate their ⁱⁿability to govern themselves.'² The emphasis slowly shifted from the question of whether the British should rule Egypt, with its ethical implications, to that of whether the Egyptians could rule Egypt, with its political implications.³

The element of hierarchy had a more tenacious existence. It was the Englishman's view of himself at the pinnacle of civilisation that Gladstone mocked so bitterly at the height of the Eastern debate in the Commons in 1877:

We are endowed with a superiority of character, a noble unselfishness, an inflexible integrity which other nations of the world are too slow to recognize; and they are stupid enough to think that we - superior beings that we are - are to be bound by the same vulgar rules that might be justly applicable to the ordinary sons of Adam.⁴

This attitude of superiority was particularly evident in Egypt and the Sudan where a large proportion of British officials was drawn directly from the universities, still an upper class preserve. One writer commented that 'The predominance of this group undoubtedly left its imprint...in the form of exclusiveness, a certain amount of racial arrogance, a feeling of noblesse oblige for the less fortunate classes, a pride in accomplishment, and a sense of duty.'⁵

It was from this superior stance that Egypt and its inhabitants were regarded.

1. Churchill to Curzon, June 13, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/9/3/56.
2. Lindsay Minute, October 15, 1921, FO/371/6205.
3. It is interesting to note that while these changes were taking place in the British view of Egypt, they did not occur to the same extent with respect to the Sudan. There 'Britain's binding obligations towards the people of the Soudan', Daily Telegraph, May 6, 1922, were repeatedly reaffirmed in public and in private. This may be explained perhaps by the putative level of the Sudan's development and the fact that Britain's control of that region was not as threatened as in Egypt. Benevolent paternalism could thus continue unabated.
4. Gladstone, May 7, 1877, Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Series CCXXXIV (1877), 415.
5. Tignor, op.cit., p.192.

One of the most striking motifs was the image of the character and mentality of the Oriental for whose benefit the Englishman ruled. Lord Cromer's views are an excellent illustration of the general picture of the Egyptian. This composite figure is also interesting as an implicit commentary on the Englishman's view of himself in the East. According to Cromer

Want of accuracy, which easily degenerates into untruthfulness, is ...the main characteristic of the Oriental mind.

The mind of the Oriental...is eminently wanting in symmetry. His reasoning is of the most slipshod description.

...the grave and silent Easterner, devoid of energy and initiative, stagnant in mind, wanting in curiosity about matters which are new to him, careless of waste of time and patient under suffering.

...look at the fulsome flattery, which the Oriental will offer to his superior and expect to receive from his inferior...

...the ways of the Oriental are tortuous; his love of intrigue is inveterate....He reposes unlimited faith in his cunning...¹

Thus from the very start of the Anglo-Egyptian connection the Egyptian was regarded as a backward, lazy, incompetent; an intriguing and cunning creature who thrived on false flattery which pandered to his vanity. Whether the roots of this image are in the more generalised notion of the East or in the nature of the British sources of knowledge of Egypt is difficult to tell.² Whatever the case, the views held by Cromer were deeply imbedded in the British mind.

With the passage of time the Briton's opinions about his native protégés changed but little. This was true of the British officials in Egypt, of the members of the Foreign Office, and of the foreigners residing in Egypt. In the post-1919 period, when the need to consider an effective policy for Egypt became increasingly urgent, the image of the cunning, vain and indolent native remained essentially the same as it had been in Cromer's day.

This view of the Egyptian was shared at almost all levels. In particular, the vanity of the natives and the need to pander to it is a constant theme in the

1. Cromer, Modern Egypt, II, 146-51.

2. Amin Bey, an Egyptian nationalist and Zaghlul's son-in-law, ascribes some British difficulties in this respect to the fact that for social reasons 'the British were sometimes dependent for their information on sources which, though Oriental, were not Egyptian.' Amin Youssef Bey, Independent Egypt (London, 1940), p.10.

documents of the period. Milner wrote that the 'vanity of the Egyptian upper class' was 'one of their most naked characteristics.'¹ He was not alone in this belief. John Murray, head of the Egyptian Department at the Foreign Office, anticipated the 1921 Anglo-Egyptian negotiations with some dismay for 'as we are dealing with Orientals the conversations are bound to be protracted.' He added that 'the higher the social status and political position of the British chairman the more will Egyptian vanity be flattered.'² Lindsay, Assistant Under-Secretary, strongly agreed 'that Egyptians are snobs.'³ Curzon, particularly, was not immune to such views and when Allenby suggested that it might be politic to confer the title of Majesty on Sultan Ahmad Fuad, he noted that 'His Majesty of Afghanistan is bad enough, we do not need another Majesty in Egypt.'⁴ Finally, Herbert Pasha, the Officer Commanding, Cairo, in attempting to convince his subordinates in the Egyptian army of the dangers involved in disorder, appealed to the interests of their 'class' since 'this pleases their vanity.'⁵

The low esteem in which the native was held had a powerful corollary in the fear that virtually every native harboured a violent hatred for Europeans and Christians and waited for the moment when he could destroy them. This was born of Britain's mid-nineteenth century Indian experience and reinforced by the Alexandria riots of 1882. Such was this fear that Cromer could use the bête noire of a fanatical native revolt to induce the British government in 1893 to reinforce the army of occupation and strengthen British control contested by the then Khedive Abbas.⁶

Cromer's action apparently had a conditioning effect on the British mind. Thus the riots of 1919 and 1921, resulting in great loss of European lives were a confirmation that Egypt's foreign residents continued to be the objects of native hatred. The ordinary British residents of Egypt were convinced that domestic quarrels ominously tended to take 'an anti-European turn' and that 'the assumption that...the

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1. Entry for March 8, 1920 in Milner's Diary, BLO, Milner Papers, Box 290, pp.147-8.
 2. Murray Minute, March 7, 1921, to Allenby to Curzon, March 5, 1921, Tel. No. 141, FO/371/6294.
 3. Lindsay Minute, March 7, 1921, to ibid.
 4. Curzon Minute, May 23, 1921, to Allenby to Curzon, May 22, 1921, Tel. No. 351, FO/371/6334.
 5. E.S. Herbert Pasha to Wingate, February 21, 1922, SAD, Wingate Papers, 240/1.
 6. Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid, Egypt and Cromer: A Study in Anglo-Egyptian Relations (London, 1969), p.111.

Egyptians had been trained to restrain their fanatical and anti-European tendencies ...has been proved up to the hilt to be a fallacy.'¹ Far more important, these views gained wide currency among British officials both in Cairo and in London. One important British official warned that Egyptian Muslims were 'extreme and anti-foreign,' and counselled greater reliance on the Syrian element in Egypt.²

The Military Court of Enquiry into the Alexandria riots of May 1921 stated the following in its conclusions:

The Court draws attention to a very important fact. Always there has existed in Egypt - at any rate among the lower classes - a fanatical hatred of Europeans. It has shown itself again and again. In 1882 when Great Britain was forced to occupy the country; at Denshawai; in 1919; and now again in 1921. Whenever the Government has grown too weak to control this feeling; or whenever the people think it has grown too weak.³

The 1919 riots were an important factor in converting the more generalised fears about the natives' hatred of Europeans into the highly specific imagery of 1882. These fears now took the form of a strong apprehension that events might throw up a new Urabi who would lead a native rising against foreign control. This was perhaps the most potent leit-motif of British thought about Egypt which was ruled so uneasily after 1919. Events came to be viewed within this context and the parallel between Zaghlul and Urabi was often repeated.

Patterson, then acting Adviser to the Ministry of the Interior, warned Allenby in April 1921, that the 'state of affairs has been described by those who remember it as closely similar to that prevailing just before the Arabi rebellion.'⁴ In the same month Allenby was warned by the Egyptian Prime Minister, Adli Pasha, that the Wafd's influence over the Egyptian army - the base of the original Urabi's power - was increasing. Allenby made provision for the early dispatch to Egypt of elements

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1. V.F. Naggiar (British Chamber of Commerce in Egypt) to Allenby, May 31, 1921 in Allenby to Curzon, June 6, 1921, Desp. No. 493, FO/371/6297; and, W.E. Kingsford (British Union in Egypt) to Allenby, May 26, 1921 in Allenby to Curzon, May 30, 1921, Desp. No. 459, FO/371/6296.
 2. R. Greg to R. Furness, February 4, 1921, FO/371/6293. Syrians, who emigrated to Egypt around the turn of the century, were considered more trustworthy because they were an alien and often Christian element in Egyptian society.
 3. Summary of the Report of the Military Court of Enquiry into the Alexandria Riots of May 1921, p.8 in Allenby to Curzon, July 5, 1921, Desp. No. 587, FO/371/6300.
 4. Allenby to Curzon, April 30, 1921, Desp. No. 288, FO/371/6295.

of Britain's Mediterranean fleet because 'I believe that Zaghlul is in such an exalted state of mind that it would not be beyond him to attempt a coup similar to that of Arabi Pasha.'¹ Keown Boyd, Oriental Secretary at the Residency and later the Director-General of the European Section in the Department of Public Security, wrote that Zaghlul, 'sooner or later, may start a sort of Communist [sic] revolution, anti-European, anti-Turk, anti-Landed classes, pure Egyptian business.'²

The frequency with which the Urabi leit-motif recurs was too great to be mere coincidence, and Allenby was deeply affected by it.³ He soon came to see in Zaghlul Pasha the greatest threat to Britain's presence in Egypt and was firmly convinced 'that in all probability Zaghlul will have to be banished from the country for good as Arabi was.'⁴ This fear continued to preoccupy the British and it is little wonder, therefore, that when Churchill pressed his opposition to a liberal policy in Egypt, he reverted in Cabinet to the familiar spectre of the slaughter of Europeans.⁵ In addition, he publicly warned that the 'mobs of Cairo and Alexandria' would make 'short work of the European and foreign populations.'⁶

Approaches: Cromerism and Neo-Cromerism

Built upon all these diverse and recurring themes were the two more complex and major approaches to policy which in turn eventually became a part of the overall British perception of Egypt. These approaches were what came to be known as 'Cromerism' and 'Milnerism'. Their particular prominence can be attributed to Cromer's

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1. Allenby to Curzon, April 8, 1921, Tel. No. 223, FO/371/6294.
 2. Keown Boyd to Col. Watson, June 30, 1921, FO/371/6301.
 3. Two striking examples are: 'Zaghloul no doubt relied on mob force throughout the country under most favourable circumstances...primarily to overthrow the Cabinet and next the Dynasty a la Araby.' Excerpt of a letter from Major Anderson, Senior Inspector in the Ministry of the Interior, June 6, 1921, FO/371/6297; and, 'Today we have another Arabi, the tool of the older class of statesmen, who see in the new order of things a death-blow to their vested interests...' E50, Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) Report, June 18, 1921, FO/371/6297.
 4. Allenby made these comments to Sir Eyre Crowe on October 1, 1921, Crowe Minute. to Scott to Curzon, September 30, 1921, Tel. No. 565, FO/371/6305.
 5. W.S. Churchill., The European Communities in Egypt, July 28, 1921, C.P.3171, CAB/24/126.
 6. Churchill in a speech to the British Cotton Growing Association, Times, June 7, 1921.

early success, his later unassailable authority and, in the case of Milnerism, to the position of its author and the circumstances of its espousal.

The essence of Cromerism was the translation of the political dicta of Lord Granville's despatch on British policy into a framework of administrative reality. Nominal Ottoman suzerainty over Egypt and Great Power interest in the region to a large extent imposed on Britain the need to adopt the indirect methods of a 'veiled protectorate'.¹ Inspired by Cromer's concern about these external restrictions, Granville's policy had two bases: Britain's 'giving advice' to the nominal rulers of Egypt, and insistence 'on the adoption of the policy they recommend' to the point, if necessary, of assuring 'that those Ministers and Governors who do not follow this course should cease to hold their offices.'² The object was to secure 'that the order of things to be established shall be of a satisfactory character and possess the elements of stability.'³ Cromer interpreted this as a policy whereby 'we do not govern Egypt, we only govern the governors of Egypt.'⁴

The strategic interests that brought the British to Egypt made stability a major concern of policy and this would of necessity lead to the attempt to reconstruct Egypt's internal administration. At the time Britain's strategic interests were not regarded as irreconcilable with the paternalist view that the Englishman 'came not as a conqueror, but in the familiar garb of a saviour of society.'⁵ Therefore, by 'governing the governors' Cromer was able to develop an administrative approach that suited Britain's interests in, as well as her current views about the East.

Cromer sought to ensure the prosperity of the peasants, 'for centuries past... a subject race,'⁶ through the close supervision of the material aspects of their

1. Alfred Milner, England and Egypt (London, 1904), p.25.
2. Granville to Baring, January 4, 1883, Desp. No. 6, in J.C. Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A Documentary Record (New Jersey, 1956), I, pp.97-9. For details about this period, see: J. Marlowe, Anglo-Egyptian Relations, 1800-1956 (London, 1965), and, see: Tignor, op.cit.
3. Granville, February 5, 1884, Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Series, CCLXXXIV (1884), 30.
4. Cited in al-Sayyid, op.cit., p.68.
5. Cromer, op.cit., II, 123. It is interesting that according to Cromer 'one of the first qualifications necessary in order to play the part of a saviour of society is that the saviour should believe in himself and his mission.' Ibid., II, 124.
6. Cromer, op.cit., I, 328.

society. On the other hand, he dealt with the formal government of Egypt through an ostensibly autonomous native elite amenable to British 'advice'. The result was that the Englishman 'would not annex Egypt, but he would do as much good to the country as if he had annexed it.'¹ Thus, from the start, the underlying principle of Cromerism as a policy was the harmonising of appearance and reality. From this the rest flowed naturally: ruling but not being seen to rule.

In time Cromerism became more than an administrative system. What had been a pragmatic policy constructed on the basis of the current political and diplomatic constellation as well as contemporary attitudes became for some a pervasive myth, overlaid with nostalgia for the simpler days, and an important factor in the approach to future policy formulation. Two factors were responsible for this development: Cromer's unusual ability and the changes in Egypt.

The mystique surrounding the personality of 'the Lord', as Cromer was commonly known in Egypt, was especially powerful. According to Curzon he was 'a man... with a remarkable gift, with that genius for ruling an Oriental country.'² Cromer became the prototype for the British proconsul in the East. Milner voiced the sentiments of most of his contemporaries when he wrote in 1890 that Cromer's 'unostentatious supremacy is a real masterpiece of political management', and wondered 'whether we could possibly get on without him.'³

The 1914-18 war transformed this admiration for Cromer and his genius into an admiration for the age of Cromer. Harry Boyle, Cromer's Oriental Secretary, wrote after his return to Cairo in 1921 that

The period during which Lord Cromer held the office of agent and consul-general in Egypt has passed into tradition as a sort of golden age. All the shortcomings of the regime are forgotten, and even men who were at the time antagonistic and hostile critics now profess the prevailing belief.⁴

The earlier system of indirect British rule was dislocated by the protectorate, while the exigencies of the war altered the relationship between Britain and Egypt that had hitherto existed. Egypt's nominal autonomy was replaced by openly declared

1. Ibid., II, 125.

2. Curzon, Stenographic Notes of a Meeting of Representatives of the United Kingdom, the Dominions and India, July 6, 1921, FO/371/6301.

3. Milner to Goschen, January 5, 1890, cited in al-Sayyid, op.cit., p.83.

4. Boyle to Vansittart, June 11, 1921, Enclosure 2, FO/371/6298.

tutelage. The handful of capable inspectors who supervised Egypt's development and administration under the 'mufettish' system were overwhelmed by the influx of large numbers of inexperienced officials. By 1919 British rule was more complex, resented and uneasy than in the days of Cromer.

Faced with this new and disquieting situation, there was a desire to return to the earlier 'Halcyon Days'. This was especially true among those who had served in Egypt during 'the palmy days of the "Cromer Myth".'¹ Boyle, who returned to Egypt after an absence of fourteen years, was representative of this group which viewed the protectorate as an episode and wished to return to the informal but effective rule of the late nineteenth century - to the old balance between appearance and reality.²

Imperialist circles in London, especially those that gathered around the Secretary of State for War, Winston Churchill, had a more pragmatic view of Cromerism. They believed that it was necessary to maintain 'British control over Egypt on a footing more or less similar to that which had prevailed during the thirty-nine years of the British occupation.'³ However, since this sentiment was centred in London there was little of the nostalgic attachment, prevalent among many British officials in Egypt, to the informal administrative system of pre-protectorate days. They accepted the need for strict Cromerian control for imperial reasons, but not the manner in which Cromer exercised this control. As a result these circles believed that the British position could only be maintained by continuing the protectorate which was seen as 'a solemn act of State' not to be easily revoked.⁴ The attraction of this view for Churchill was not the return to the mythical days of Cromer, but the practical assurance that Britain's position in Egypt would be maintained as before and that her imperial interests would continue to be protected.

1. Minute by Murray, June 23, 1921, to Boyle to Vansittart, June 11, 1921, FO/371/6298.
2. Boyle believed, like many other officials, that despite the changes in Egypt it was possible to return to the old system whereby the country was ruled by a small band of dedicated and capable officials. This was the gist of Boyle's long memorandum on British policy. Boyle to Vansittart, June 11, 1921, FO/371/6298. Then, in his conversations with Foreign Office officials 'he advocated a reversion pure & simple to what is called Cromerism.' Lindsay Minute, June 26, 1921 to ibid.
3. Allenby to Curzon, April 16, 1921, Desp. No. 311, FO/371/6295.
4. W.S. Churchill, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War: The Egyptian Proposals, August 24, 1920, C.P.1803, CAB/24/111.

Approaches: Milnerism

The concession of form in order to retain the essence of power, the traditional balance of Cromerism, leads to the discussion of its successor, Milnerism. While Churchill and neo-Cromerites were attracted by the formal aspects of Cromerian control, it was Milner who attempted to reestablish - given the circumstances of the day - the spirit of Cromerism: the balance between appearance and reality.

The decision to send a mission of enquiry to Egypt to recommend measures which would end the post-war unrest and maintain the protectorate was taken shortly after Allenby's appointment in March 1919. After months of delay, the Special Mission,¹ headed by Lord Milner, the aging Secretary of State for the Colonies, arrived in Egypt in December 1919 and left in March 1920. From June to August 1920 Milner held conversations in London with Zaghlul Pasha and members of the Egyptian delegation accompanying him.

The Mission's visit to Egypt and the London conversations resulted in a series of proposals. According to the Conclusions of the Report, these were made in an effort to effect 'a reconciliation of British and Egyptians' and, 'by giving scope to...[the] spirit of independence and to the increased capacity of the Egyptians to govern their own country, to win over the better elements of Nationalism and restore the spirit of good-will and cooperation between British and Egyptians in the work of Government.'²

The Mission proposed in its report that these aims should be realised through negotiation of a treaty between Britain and Egypt. The independence and integrity of Egypt would be guaranteed and she would be protected against foreign aggression. In return, Britain would retain 'a certain measure of control for the protection of British and foreign interests.'³

The Mission left the details of such a treaty for a later stage but stated certain positions which ought not to be abandoned: the influence and prestige of

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1. The members of the Milner Mission were: Sir Rennel Rodd, a former colleague of Cromer and late ambassador to Rome; Gen. Sir John Maxwell who had served in Egypt; Brigadier-General Sir Owen Thomas, a former Labour Member of Parliament and Boer War hero; J.A. Spender, Editor of the Westminster Gazette; and, Sir Cecil Hurst, Legal Adviser to the Foreign Office.
 2. General Conclusions of the Report of the Special Mission to Egypt, March 3, 1920 [hereafter Conclusions], p.2 in Milner to Curzon, May 17, 1920, FO/371/6295.
 3. Idem.

the British High Commissioner should be preserved, with the control of Egypt's foreign relations and the protection of foreign interests in Egypt vested in him; legislation affecting foreigners should be enacted only with the concurrence of the High Commissioner; Britain should continue to maintain an army in Egypt, determine its strength and disposition, and have access to Egypt's installations for communications; and, because of her responsibility for the interests of foreigners, Britain should have a degree of control over the Egyptian departments dealing with finance, justice and public security with the retention of at least two British advisers. In return, Egypt would be granted the following concessions: within the stated limitations, the Egyptian government would have full control over the country's internal administration; would be able to determine what positions, other than those specifically reserved by treaty, should be filled by British officials; and, would have the right to maintain non-political relations with foreign powers and to conclude commercial treaties with Britain's approval. Thus in the Conclusions to its Report, the Milner Mission clearly departed from the principle of the protectorate and proposed in its place a bilateral contractual relationship providing a form of well-regulated independence for Egypt.

The Memorandum that Milner presented to Curzon in August 1920, following the conversations with Zaghlul, further departed from the existing formal British position in Egypt. It specified the nature of the envisaged treaty relationship: Britain would recognise 'the independence of Egypt as a constitutional monarchy with representative institutions,' while Egypt would grant Britain, in time of need, 'all the assistance in her power.'¹ As in the original proposals, Britain would protect Egypt against aggression or foreign interference. A number of points enumerated in the Milner Memorandum went a good deal beyond the earlier proposals embodied in the Mission's Conclusions. The most important of these was the concession of the control of Egypt's foreign relations to the Egyptian government with the ambiguous condition that Egypt would not 'adopt in foreign countries an attitude which is inconsistent with the alliance or will create difficulties for Great Britain.'²

These two sets of proposals provided the bare bones of Milnerism. Milnerism was important for several reasons. First, it was the last major attempt to formulate

1. Milner Memorandum, August 21, 1920 [hereafter Memorandum], p.1, FO/371/6295.

2. Idem.

a general policy towards Egypt before the declaration of its independence in 1922. Second, Milnerism added a new and often confusing dimension to British views on Egypt because its essence was apparently so misunderstood. Finally, it became the touchstone of future policy towards Egypt. Milner's more imperialist critics were convinced that the Mission 'signed the surrender to Egyptian Nationalism'¹ and turned Britain into 'nothing more than well-wisher and privileged friend'² to Egypt. This view was held by most historians who saw Milner as 'by no means a die-hard in respect to Anglo-Egyptian relations, but a statesman with liberal views in a changing world'³ who 'did not look upon Egypt as part of the British Empire,' but 'believed that independence was the proper status for the country.'⁴

These interpretations of Milnerism were based on two related sources: the Milner Mission's innovative proposals and the activities of one of its more articulate members, J.A. Spender, the Liberal editor of the Westminster Gazette. The argument in support of Milner's liberalism was that initially he had been sent to find a solution to Britain's difficulties in Egypt within the framework of the protectorate. However, barely two weeks after arriving in Egypt, on December 27, 1919, the Mission changed its brief by declaring its aims to be the reconciliation of 'the aspirations of the Egyptian people with the special interests which Britain has in Egypt.'⁵ Both the advocates and the opponents of Milnerism viewed this as one of the most significant moments in the Mission's activities determining the direction of its policy. Lord Lloyd, an implacable foe of Milnerism and Allenby's successor as High Commissioner, wrote that this 'enormous concession,' meant that 'the Mission tore up its own terms of reference.'⁶ With this act widely accepted as the first indication of the Mission's true views, Milner's final recommendations to the British government were inevitably placed within the neat liberal pattern prepared for it.

This view of radical innovation received added impetus from the extensive and

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| 1. Lloyd, <u>op.cit.</u> , II, 47. | 2. <u>Ibid.</u> , II, 33. |
| 3. John E. Wrench, <u>Alfred Lord Milner: The Man of No Illusions, 1854-1925</u> (London, 1958), p.362. | |
| 4. A.M. Gollin, <u>Proconsul in Politics: A Study of Lord Milner in Opposition and in Power</u> (London, 1964), p.592. For similar views see, V. Halperin, <u>Lord Milner and the Empire: The Evolution of British Imperialism</u> (London, 1952), pp.78ff. | |
| 5. Text in Gollin, <u>op.cit.</u> , p.591. | 6. Lloyd, <u>op.cit.</u> , II, 15. |

extremely important activities of J.A. Spender who spent much time and energy in advocating his understanding of the Mission's approach to Egyptian policy after his return to England.¹ Spender's polemical writings and memoirs were the first version of the workings and motives of Milner and his Mission. It was these accounts that formed the basis for much that was uncritically accepted about Milnerism.² His accounts, however, were more a reflection of his own partisan approach to the entire Egyptian question than a true picture of Milner's motives and the nature of his views. While Spender did not succeed immediately in the object of his advocacy, namely the adoption of Milnerism as Britain's policy, he succeeded admirably in convincing most people of Milner's presumed liberalism.

The question now arises whether Milnerism was in fact completely outside the sphere of previous policy or whether its components were based upon the traditional elements of the British approach to Egypt. The answer to this may be found in Lord Milner's conception of Egypt, his approach to the Special Mission and the manner in which he viewed its results.

Milner's career as an official in the Egyptian Ministry of Finance reveals more or less orthodox views. His work, England in Egypt,³ first published in 1893, is an unexceptional statement of the period approach. The ensuing years saw little change in Milner's opinions about Egypt and its place within the British imperial scheme. In 1917, when the future of Egypt was being considered by the Egyptian

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1. For a detailed description of Spender's activities on behalf of a liberal solution to the Egyptian question, see the twelve-page note, Spender and Egypt, prepared by G.C. Delaney, the veteran Reuters correspondent in Cairo, for the biography of Spender by H. Wilson Harris, STAC, Delaney Papers, 1944. Also, see the articles on Egypt in the Westminster Gazette throughout the period.
 2. For example, Spender's account of the December 1919 declaration and the motives behind it are accepted unquestioningly by Wrench, loc.cit., Halperin, loc.cit., and Gollin, loc.cit. The degree to which Spender served as a primary source can be seen from a comparison of the following passages: 1) Milner 'did not share the vulgar opinion that Egypt was part of the British Empire, but held, on the contrary, [that] the restoration of her independence, subject to certain essential safeguards, was the logical and natural development of the occupation and our pledges in regard to it.' Spender, op.cit., p.91. 2) 'Milner, especially, believed that a settlement of some kind was necessary, for the sake of Britain's position in the Near East. Moreover, an old Egyptian official, he did not look upon Egypt as part of the British Empire. Subject to certain safeguards, he believed that independence was the proper status for the country.' Gollin, loc.cit. All the writers refer to Spender in their notes as a primary source.
 3. Milner, op.cit., passim.

Administration Committee, Milner reflected the consensus and stated that

Unless we lose the war, Egypt will in future be as much part of the British Empire as India or Nigeria. Whether we proceed to annexation or, as I personally think better, we content ourselves with the form of a Protectorate, in either case we shall be virtually responsible for the good government of the whole vast territory from the Mediterranean to the headwaters of the Nile.¹

Once he had embarked on his Mission, Milner's approach to Egypt was characterised by administrative pragmatism rather than by any great commitment to doctrinaire liberalism. After the widespread Egyptian boycott of the Mission it was the practical approach that led Milner to the conclusion that 'the agitation for "complete independence" has swept right over the country,' and 'is a serious danger, which by hook or by crook we must try to overcome.'² The tenor of Milner's words indicates that he did not contemplate an abject surrender to irresistible Wilsonian principles, as Lloyd suggested, but was trying to come to terms realistically with a people who 'are at the moment somewhat intoxicated with the new craze for "self-determination."³

It was against this background that the Mission took its first major step - the declaration of December 27. Despite the great significance read into this early act, Milner wrote in his diary on December 23, 1919, that the manifesto would be issued primarily 'in order to remove the prejudice which has been excited against it the Mission and to induce the Egyptians to come forward and discuss with it.'⁴ Milner not only appears to have had only practical considerations in mind at the time, but also seems largely unaware of the manifesto's possible repercussions in the future. Again he notes in his diary:

Visit to Allenby this morning at 10 & about an hour's conversation. I showed him the proposed manifesto, to wh. he agreed, after a little hesitation. He was very anxious that he shd seem in any way to budge from 'the Protectorate'...But he was quite reconciled, when I pointed out to him that our manifesto in no way abandoned our position in this respect, but simply threw the door open to discussion.⁵

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1. Milner, Memorandum, October 31, 1917, PCL, Storrs Papers, Box II, 4.
 2. Milner to Lloyd George, December 28, 1919, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/39/1/52.
 3. M[ilner], Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies: The Egyptian Proposals, September 16, 1920, C.P.1870, CAB/24/111 [hereafter Egyptian Proposals].
 4. Milner Diary, BLO, Milner Papers, Box 289, p.69.
 5. Entry for December 26, 1919, Milner Diary, BLO, Milner Papers, Box 289, p.172.

Once having faced this problem, Milner and the Mission set about defining in a like manner the problems that confronted the British administration in Egypt. From the documents of the period, two major factors appear to have taken on primary importance: the Egyptians' strong detestation of the language and implications of the protectorate - a corollary to the 'craze for "self-determination"'; and, the apparent breakdown of the longstanding collaboration between a local elite and the British officials in Egypt. Both were closely related.

The first factor, Egyptian hatred of the very word 'protectorate', was of the utmost importance. In its Arabic form, himaya, it literally meant protectorate or patronage.¹ However, it also possessed the pejorative connotation of protection extended to a subject people or race. This was by no means unknown to many English observers whatever their views. Spender described the terms as 'a word notoriously signifying a servile condition,'² while Valentine Chirol of the Times wrote that the word 'in its Arabic form connoted a humiliating status of inferiority, [that] had come to stink in the nostrils of all Egyptians.'³ P.G. Elgood, a British official in Egypt, noted that 'into the expression the Egyptians read a sinister and humiliating meaning, an intention on the part of England to indicate to the world his inferiority.'⁴

For these reasons Milner was convinced - on practical grounds - that to carry on as before raised 'the prospect of the difficulties which the permanent hostility of the Egyptian intelligentsia will create for us.'⁵ This would become the greatest obstacle to continuing Britain's traditional system of ruling through amenable native protégés and would result in the impossible situation where 'every act of

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1. The concept of Himaya had a long history dating back to the pre-Islamic period when it meant the protection given for compensation by nomads to settled inhabitants or travellers in territory controlled by them. In the mediaeval period this described the relationship between patron and client, similar to practices in Byzantium or the late Roman Empire. In the later Ottoman Empire the term Himaya referred to the non-Muslim communities who enjoyed the consular protection of the Powers. Thus the term began as a description of a relationship of inequality and later was used in connection with 'inferior' non-Muslims. For details, see: Cl. Cahen and P.J. Vatikiotis, 'Himaya', in Encyclopaedia of Islam, III, 394-5.
 2. J.A. Spender, "The Egyptian Problem," Qly Rev., 237 (April, 1922), p.418.
 3. Sir Valentine Chirol, Occident and Orient (Chicago, 1924), pp.92-3.
 4. P.G. Elgood, The Transit of Egypt (London, 1928), p.252.
 5. Milner, Conclusions, p.2.

authority which we exercise is liable to be challenged, and is in fact challenged.'¹ Britain's problems appeared to centre upon the nominal relation in which Egypt stood to Britain and the manner in which this threatened the system of cooperative Anglo-Egyptian rule instituted in Cromer's day.

Milner's opinions of Egypt's place in the British imperial scheme should be viewed against this assessment of Britain's difficulties. Despite any claim by others to the contrary, Milner never strayed from the tenets of orthodoxy. He was fully convinced that

Egypt is now not only the road to our Eastern Empire, but has also become the road to the new territories under the British flag....It is truly the nodal point of our whole Imperial scheme.²

Milner further wrote that

...We want a military base in Egypt for our own imperial purposes
...We want a strong foot-hold in Egypt as being a vital link in the chain of Empire. That is the only reason wh. we ever went there. We could not let Egypt fall into other hands.³

Milner's proposals for a new policy resulted from his assessment of Britain's position in Egypt and her interests there. If viewed within the context of the protectorate, Milnerism was indeed innovative. A bilateral treaty status was proposed in place of the previous unilateral position of 'veiled protectorate' or later the open protectorate, and the emphasis of control was to be shifted from the country's internal administration to its external relations as they impinged on Britain's imperial interests. The important point here, however, with regard to the essence of Milnerism, is the motivation behind Milner's specific proposals and the manner in which he believed these would operate.

With regard to the formal status of ally proposed for Egypt, Milner firmly maintained that this was meant 'to give such rights as Great Britain may hereafter possess in Egypt unquestionable legal basis in the deliberate consent of the Egyptian people.'⁴ He postulated that in order to re-establish Anglo-Egyptian collaboration, previously the basis of the British position, it would be necessary to concede the facade of independence to retain the essence of power. This was an updated

1. Ibid., p.1.

2. Ibid., p.2.

3. Milner to Curzon, August 19, 1920, BLO, Milner Papers, Box 162.

4. Milner, Conclusions, p.1.

version of Cromer's 'governing the governors' - the balance between appearance and reality. Milner expressed his belief in this balance on several occasions. He wrote that since the basis of British difficulties was 'our "administrative occupation" of the country, our interference with all their domestic affairs,'¹ it was necessary to find the means by which nationalism's vocal demands could be reconciled with Britain's overriding interests.

The difficulty is to find a way of making Egypt's relation to Great Britain appear a more independent and dignified one than it ever really can be without our abandoning the degree of control which, in view of native incompetence and corruption, we are constrained to keep.²

Here Milner returned to Cromer's balance: the solution might be found in

The blessed word Emphasis added 'independence' which will get us round many awkward corners just as the unfortunate word 'Protectorate' would make even Paradise unattractive to the Egyptians.³

Milner's reasoning here was quite clear. He believed that Egypt was the 'Clapham Junction of the Empire, and so long as that station was, in fact, in British hands, he could see no objection to Clapham ruling itself.'⁴

Milner was quite aware that, within the framework of the protectorate, his proposals constituted a 'more liberal plan,'⁵ yet he also believed that beyond this 'in a sense they really are a step backward, but to a more secure position than that which we now occupy.'⁶ Here Milner was convinced - despite Lloyd George's later remark that 'in the days of incipient decrepitude he had shown his readiness to surrender so much'⁷ - that 'even in my hey-day I should have regarded the proposed

1. Ibid., p.2.

2. Milner to Lloyd George, December 28, 1919, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/39/1/52.

3. Ibid., p.4. Milner adopted the approach of conceding appearance in order to retain the essence of power even in his most controversial proposal - Egyptian control of foreign affairs. In the Cabinet of January 4, 1921 he stated: 'If the Egyptians were given the appearance of controlling their own foreign affairs they would not bother about the substance, and the terms of the proposed Treaty absolutely precluded their having any foreign policy independent of Great Britain.' Cabinet 1(21), CAB/23/24.

4. Milner to L.S. Amery in 1921. Cited in Halperin, op.cit., p.83. For similar comments by Milner, see Conclusions, p.3.

5. Ibid., p.4.

6. Ibid., p.1.

7. Lloyd George to the Marquess of Reading, August 14, 1929, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, G/16/10/4.

concessions as just and politic, and as calculated to strengthen and not to weaken our Imperial position.'¹

Perhaps the best evidence in favour of the claim for Milnerism as the heir to the spirit of Cromerism may be found in a comment in the Mission's Conclusions that was not intended for publication:

In pursuing this policy we must take account of the sensitiveness of the Egyptians, of their self-importance and love of forms and phrases, and seek to give to the future status of Egypt the greatest appearance of independence compatible with the maintenance of the absolutely indispensable minimum of British control.²

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1. Milner, Conclusions, p.1.
 2. This appeared in square brackets in Conclusions, p.2, and Milner wrote to Curzon that those comments were extremely important and that 'they ought to go forward with the rest...whatever may be done with the other parts of the memorandum, those bracketed passages should under no circumstances be published.' Milner to Curzon, May 17, 1920, Curzon Papers, FO/800/153.

PART TWO: CAIRO'S YEARS, 1922-1923

CHAPTER FOUR: THE FAILURE OF NEGOTIATIONS

...the political history of Egypt has been the history of the slow dissolution of the Granville despatch.¹

With the despatch of the Milner Mission's General Conclusions to Lord Curzon, Britain's formal position in Egypt declined at an accelerated pace. Two years elapsed, however, before the British government unilaterally granted independence to Egypt in March 1922. Despite the appearance of activity, there is a measure of truth in the observation that often 'interest is not tantamount to policy and activity does not constitute action.'²

A review of the events intervening between the presentation of Milner's Report and the declaration of independence illustrates the difficulty and hesitation that characterised the British attempt to formulate and implement a viable policy.

Prelude to Negotiations

The Milner Mission forwarded its conclusions to Lord Curzon in May 1920. At the end of August, Milner supplemented this with a memorandum incorporating the results of his conversations with Saad Zaghlul, the nationalist leader, as well as with Adli Pasha and other Egyptian government leaders who had come to London after the boycott of the Mission in Egypt. This Memorandum and the Conclusions formed the basis of Milner's solution for the Egyptian problem.³

Although the Milner proposals had already been transmitted to the Residency, been released by the Egyptians to their press and been the subject of sharp comment in Cabinet Papers,⁴ the actual texts were only formally submitted to the Cabinet

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1. M.S. Amos, England and Egypt (Nottingham: Cust Foundation Lecture, 1929), p.10.
 2. Frankel, op.cit., p.197.
 3. For a detailed outline of Milner's proposals, see supra, pp.63-64.
 4. For example, Churchill wrote a biting critique of Milner's scheme based on 'the proposals which have been published in all the newspapers,' but which had not yet been submitted to the Cabinet. W.S.[Churchill], The Egyptian Proposals: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War, August 24, 1920, C.P. 1803, CAB/24/111.

with Curzon's covering note on October 11, 1920.¹ Explaining that the Cabinet's adjournment had prevented their earlier submission, Curzon urged the serious consideration of Milner's proposals. Although they had been formulated independently and did not commit the government, Curzon noted that the government was committed by Allenby's pledge to the Sultan that a delegation would be appointed 'to discuss the projected arrangement with His Majesty's Government.'² He therefore called for a decision on a British negotiating position, to be followed by an invitation to the Sultan to send a delegation to London for talks. Optimistic that this could be done quickly, Curzon asked Allenby to remain in England for an additional fortnight so that he could return to Egypt with a proposal in hand.

Curzon's optimism was misplaced. No action was taken for months. Despite the urgency of the situation, the Cabinet was asked by Churchill and his supporters, as late as January 4, 1921, to defer a decision in view of Dominion interest, 'until after a discussion at the Imperial Cabinet next summer.'³

Allenby, however, was concerned about the effects of further delay and, on January 17, cabled a formula for an invitation to the Sultan to send a delegation to London. Acknowledging that his formula, offering a 'treaty of alliance' if Britain's 'special interests' were secured, 'admits us to abolition of protectorate if negotiations prove successful,' Allenby believed that 'abolition is implied if policy initiated by Lord Milner is to be pursued.'⁴ Therein lay the difficulty: the Cabinet was still either unable or unwilling to decide whether Milner's policy was indeed to be pursued. Curzon placed Allenby's formula before the Cabinet on February 22 and called for action lest there be a recurrence of disturbances. Yet doubts were expressed as to the urgency for action.'⁵ Allenby's formula was accepted with one major revision: the term 'treaty of alliance' was replaced by the vaguer word 'relationship'.⁶ There still was resistance to the notion of a treaty.

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1. C[urzon]. of K[eddleston]., The Egyptian Proposals: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, October 11, 1920, FO/371/6295.
 2. Ibid., p.8.
 3. Cabinet Minutes, January 4, 1921, Cabinet 1(21), CAB/23/24.
 4. Allenby to Curzon, January 17, 1921, Tel. No. 39, FO/371/6292.
 5. Cabinet Minutes, February 22, 1921, Cabinet 9(21), CAB/23/24.
 6. Curzon to Allenby, February 22, 1921, Tel. No. 119, FO/371/6292.

Once an invitation had been extended to the Sultan, events in Egypt took on increasing importance.¹ As a result of the invitation, the caretaker Ministry of Affairs resigned and Adli Yakan Pasha formed a new government on March 18. Adli then appealed to Zaghlul, despite the latter's reservations about the Milner proposals, to join in the forthcoming negotiations the results of which would be submitted for ratification to a newly-elected National Assembly. Adli further pledged not to take any far-reaching steps in anticipation of a new parliamentary regime. Adli's new government was given an enthusiastic reception and appeared to enjoy widespread support.

Zaghlul meanwhile informed Adli by cable from Paris that he would cooperate if four conditions were met: immediate abolition of the protectorate; Britain's acceptance of Zaghlul's 'reserves' to the Milner proposals; an end to British martial law and censorship; and, finally, Zaghlul's appointment as president of the delegation to London with his supporters constituting a majority of that body. Zaghlul returned to Egypt on April 4 and received a tumultuous and extended welcome. It was apparent that the negotiation of an acceptable agreement would require Zaghlul's cooperation.

Negotiations between Zaghlul and Adli began shortly thereafter and continued for ten days. While the Ministry was unable to accept Zaghlul's first three demands - since these could be accepted only by the British government - there appeared to be an identity of views on the nature of a satisfactory Anglo-Egyptian agreement. Zaghlul's insistence on the presidency of the delegation and a majority of its membership, however, caused the talks to break down. Since the Egyptian government would be responsible for the consequences of the talks, Adli was not willing to cede control over their direction in London.

At this point the Residency was apprehensive that events in Egypt might get out of hand. As early as April 8 Allenby expressed concern that Zaghlul's 'exalted state of mind' raised the possibility of a coup 'similar to that of Arabi Pasha'.² He urged the despatch of warships. At the Foreign Office Murray discounted these fears, but Lindsay and Crowe were concerned that 'a single lunatic [Zaghlul] can so

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1. For a detailed summary of events in the period between the despatch of an invitation and the Alexandria riots and for a Foreign Office appreciation of these events, see, Murray, Minute, May 24, 1921, FO/371/6296.
 2. Allenby to Curzon, April 8, 1921, Tel. No. 223, FO/371/6294.

upset things.'¹

The situation in Egypt deteriorated after the end of the Adli-Zaghlul talks on April 25. Allenby's fears about disturbances appeared justified. Wafdist demonstrations were organised against Adli's government and at the same time some moderates withdrew their support from Zaghlul. There were outbreaks in Tanta on April 29. There were major disturbances in Cairo and Alexandria on May 20, followed by violent anti-European rioting on May 22. The demonstrations resulted in the loss of life and were finally suppressed by British troops. The delegation to London was formed on May 10.² Although the agitation and disturbances diminished before the delegation's departure for London, they nevertheless bode ill for any attempt to gain popular approval in Egypt for a negotiated settlement, no matter how liberal the terms. This was especially true in light of the British government's as yet unrevealed reluctance to make several major concessions.

A Negotiating Position: London

The Egyptian delegation's imminent arrival in London at the beginning of July forced a Cabinet decision on Britain's negotiating position. The avoidance of a decision was not due to the absence of definite views within the government, but rather the result of sharply divergent approaches in the Foreign Office, the Cabinet, the Dominions, and at the Residency, making a uniform position difficult to achieve. These opposing views, all having the identical aim of securing British interests in Egypt, clearly emerged in the months following the publication of the Milner Report. As was noted, the Milner scheme was the touchstone for policy. It was supported, attacked, modified, or served as the springboard for further concessions; but in each case it was at the centre of policy consideration and it is within this context that the various approaches to policy must be viewed.

One of Curzon's biographers noted that Curzon supported Milner's proposals and 'was anxious for its [the scheme's] acceptance.'³ This, however, was not quite true.

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1. Minutes by Murray, Lindsay and Crowe to Allenby to Curzon, April 8, 1921, Tel. No. 223, FO/371/6294.
 2. Its more prominent members were Adli Pasha, the Prime Minister, Husayn Rushdi Pasha, the wartime Prime Minister, and Ismail Sidqi Pasha, one of the original members of the Wafd that called on Wingate.
 3. Nicholson, op.cit., p.176.

Curzon's first official comments on the scheme were in the memorandum he circulated to the Cabinet on October 11, 1920. He gave the proposal only conditional support and the conditions were by no means minor. Milner advocated the appearance of independence for Egypt by granting her a large measure of domestic autonomy while securing Britain's strategic interests through the retention of troops along the Suez Canal. Curzon, however, was reluctant to concede autonomy to the Egyptians in their internal affairs. Despite his formal acknowledgement of the Mission's 'great national and Imperial service,'¹ Curzon wrote to Balfour only two days later that 'Milner's proposals...have filled me with a great deal of alarm....Consider carefully whether we are so far compromised as to be unable to alter them.'² The manner in which Curzon sought to modify these proposals is the key to his approach to an Egyptian settlement.

Basically Curzon viewed a settlement within the polarity of what he termed 'the reality or the relics of British authority.'³ He was willing to grant nominal independence to Egypt - or he believed the Cabinet to be committed by events to some such concession - within a treaty relationship. However, goaded perhaps by Churchill's biting criticism of the scheme, Curzon pressed the Cabinet to amend the Milner proposals in the areas of troop concentrations, internal controls and foreign relations.

Milner proposed that a British force be retained mainly 'for the protection of Imperial communications'⁴ with the secondary function of defending Egypt against attack. Such a force would be reduced and concentrated in the Canal Zone. Curzon, however, took a broader view of regional strategy. He felt that Britain's military establishment in Egypt could not be limited solely to the defence of the Canal or even of Egypt. It should be viewed as the pivot for wider regional operations with Egypt serving as a British place d'armes since 'the position of Egypt renders it the inevitable and indispensable centre of British military strategy and operations in the Middle East.'⁵ But Curzon not only extended the concept of the defence of imperial communications outward, he also increased the potential British military

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1. Curzon, The Egyptian Proposals..., p.2, FO/371/6295.
 2. Curzon to Balfour, October 13, 1920, BM, Balfour Papers, add.48734.
 3. Curzon, The Egyptian Proposals..., p.2, FO/371/6295.
 4. Milner, Memorandum...
 5. Curzon, The Egyptian Proposals..., p.3, FO/371/6295.

role within Egypt by raising the familiar spectre of 'a fanatical or racial rising in Cairo,'¹ requiring the use of British troops for the protection of foreigners. It was therefore inevitable that Curzon should call for 'a British force of limited number to be placed both at Cairo and Alexandria,'² despite Milner's warning that such a force might constitute a garrison and would be viewed by the Egyptians as a new army of occupation.

Curzon also believed that the principle underlying British policy since Palmerston 'has been that we will not admit the interference of any foreign Power in Egypt.'³ From this premise flowed Curzon's vigorous opposition to the diminution of the authority of the High Commissioner and his principal aides, the Judicial and Financial Advisers to the Egyptian government, as proposed in the Milner Memorandum. He feared that this would prevent the British representative from dealing with the abuses of an inefficient native government. Nor would he be able to prevent other foreign representatives from trying 'to settle their disputes with the Egyptian Government by independent action.'⁴ As a corrective, he supported the more restrictive language of the earlier Milner Conclusions which clearly specified the authority of these officials in Egypt.

Finally, Curzon viewed Milner's concession to Egypt of control over her foreign affairs with 'considerable anxiety.'⁵ Despite promises to the contrary, he feared the possibility of Egyptian intrigues in the capitals of Europe, and European, in particular French, intrigues in Cairo once Britain formally ceased to be the protecting as well as the occupying power in Egypt.

Curzon obviously disagreed with Milner's emphasis, namely, shifting the focus of British interest from internal control to a reduced military presence that would ensure the defence of imperial communications. Curzon's own views on the most suitable status for Egypt are in his memorandum of February 14, 1921, in which he advocated nominal independence for Egypt:

1. Idem.

2. Idem.

3. Ibid., pp.4-5.

4. Ibid., pp.5-6. Curzon told the Imperial Cabinet on July 5, 1921 that Milner proposed that 'British control of the Administration should only survive in the form of the appointment of a number of rather shadowy officials whose relations with the native Government were left somewhat obscure.' Stenographic Notes of Representatives of the United Kingdom, the Dominions and India..., July 6, 1921, FO/371/6301.

5. Curzon, The Egyptian Proposals..., pp.5-6, FO/371/6295.

...what we all have in view is that Egypt would remain inside rather than outside the British Imperial system. If the best way to do this is to drop the word protectorate and conclude a Treaty of Alliance with her as we did with the Indian Princes a century ago (their relation to us has indeed been commonly defined by the constitutional writers as one of 'sub-ordinate alliance'), why not do it?¹

Curzon's willingness to urge even minimal concessions upon the Cabinet may be attributed to the premature publication of Milner's proposals and its acceptance in Egypt as a British offer, continuing pressure from the Residency for action to prevent a recurrence of disturbances, and his fear that if the Egyptian problem was not settled 'we may find that a British Labour Party or Socialist Government...may grant complete independence and sacrifice our position altogether.'² This last consideration moved others in the Cabinet as well.³

Curzon's principal advisers at the Foreign Office adopted a similar although somewhat more moderate approach.⁴ In part this may have been a result of the fact that they did not have to face Churchill's opposition in Cabinet. The views of the relevant members of the Foreign Office can be seen in their comments on the memorandum submitted by Harry Boyle calling for the restoration of the mechanics of 19th century Cromerism.⁵

Commenting on Boyle's proposed reduction in the number of British officials in Egypt while restoring a system of rigorous British inspection, Murray noted that such reforms were largely incompatible and that perhaps Boyle 'hardly realises how greatly conditions have changed since the palmy days of the "Cromer Myth".'⁶

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1. C[urzon]. of K[eddleston]., Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, February 14, 1921, FO/371/6295.
 2. Idem.
 3. For example, only two months later Austen Chamberlain expressed a similar but more generalised fear: 'I regard the growth of the Labour Party as a serious menace to the nation...because of its lack of experience, and, more seriously, because of its difference from every other Party in the House of Commons in being directed and controlled from outside Parliament, so that we find its leaders unable to take the action which they know to be right.' Chamberlain to Cecil, April 26, 1921, BM, Cecil Papers, add.51078.
 4. Commenting on the Egyptian Department's approach in October 1920, Duff Cooper noted that: 'Murray and I were strongly in favour of a settlement on these [Milner's] lines and we doubtless said so. But there was a deep division in the Cabinet.' Duff Cooper, op.cit., p.102. Foreign Office documents, however, indicate a much later conversion to Milnerism.
 5. Boyle to Vansittart, June 11, 1921, FO/371/6298.
 6. Murray, Minute, June 23, 1921, to ibid.

Lindsay echoed this view about 'a reversion pure & simple to what is called Cromerism,' adding that 'Conceivably the remedies might be applied; but meanwhile the patient's condition has changed...and we have to strike out new lines.'¹

These 'new lines' were evident in the different Foreign Office proposals before the negotiations began. One example was the Draft Military Convention composed by Murray. This draft, which attempted to include the War Office's desiderata, provided for full access for British forces to all areas and facilities in Egypt if the country was attacked or if there was a need to 'reinforce the civil authority.'² In addition, there would be virtually no limitation on the size and distribution of British forces. These were to be determined on the basis of need. This stringent draft was approved by Lindsay who felt that opinion in England and abroad would support the British position:

With this sanction behind us I would be in favour of making the utmost concession to Egypt in other articles of the Treaty...and, even if such a treaty were signed and ratified, I should feel no anxiety, for we should then be back, not at Milnerism, but at the true characteristics of Cromerism, viz. a strong sanction in the shape of British troops, and a toleration of all but intolerable abuses.³

Within the sharply divided Cabinet, opinion ranged from outright advocacy of Milner's proposals to opposition to any concessions whatever. At one end of the spectrum was H.A.L. Fisher. Arguing that it would be dangerous 'to reject the conclusions of a body so influential in composition' and that it would inflame Egyptian opinion, he claimed that,

The Milner Report offers us all the essentials of a Protectorate without the name....Egypt is a thoroughly foreign country. If she is allowed the symbols of nationality, she will acquiesce in the substance of a Protectorate.⁴

Fisher was convinced that the presence of British forces on the Canal and the pressure of the British Empire were adequate sanction, and he felt that Milner's

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1. Lindsay, Minute, June 26, 1921, to ibid.
 2. Murray, Draft Military Convention, June 22, 1921, FO/371/6207.
 3. Lindsay, Minute, June 22, 1921, to ibid.
 4. H.A.L. Fisher, The Case of Egypt, November 15, 1920, C.P. 2120, CAB/24/115.

scheme struck the balance, sought by most, between appearance and reality in Egypt.

Edwin Montagu, at the India Office, viewed the proposals from two vantage points: their impact on Egypt, and their effect on India and the Mesopotamian region in which his Office had a vital interest. While 'quite prepared to believe that Lord Milner's proposals are in every way suitable to the conditions of Egypt,' Montagu was worried that such concessions and the negotiations with Zaghlul might encourage Gandhi to attempt to secure the same for India in a like fashion. He noted that 'the methods of the Milner proposals, contrasted with the methods of settlement of Indian affairs, has enormously increased our Indian difficulties.'¹ Montagu was viewed as a liberal in the Cabinet. He believed, according to Churchill, that 'England should be the friend and head of the Moslem world'² - a belief that was in part motivated by India's huge Muslim minority. Nevertheless, concern over the way concessions might be granted Egypt led Montagu to hope, almost despairingly, 'that it may be possible to treat one part of the British Empire wholly separately and without reference to the other parts.'³

The most important and implacable opponent of any concessions was Winston Churchill. The Secretary of State for War opposed the manner in which concessions were to be made as well as their substance. In a heated memorandum, written only hours after the publication of the Milner proposals, Churchill charged that 'the cession of territory which had definitely been incorporated in the British Dominions is...a matter which required the assent not only of the Cabinet, but of Crown and Parliament.'⁴ As to the nature of the concessions, Churchill questioned whether they were real or simply a manoeuvre. If the former, 'they mean we are giving up Egypt.' but if the concessions are 'mere camouflage,' 'the Egyptian Nationalists must be very great simpletons if they let it rest there.'⁵ The basis of Churchill's opposition was that

Their [Nationalists] demand is for the effective and responsible control of their own country and the right to govern or misgovern it as they please. It is because this has never been accorded to them, and can never be accorded to them while we remain in the

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1. E.S. M[ontagu], Egypt, October 19, 1920, C.P. 2000, CAB/24/112.
 2. Churchill, op.cit., p.392.
 3. E.S.M., loc.cit.
 4. W.S.C., The Egyptian Proposals..., August 24, 1920, C.P. 1803, CAB/24/111.
 5. Idem.

the country, that they are discontented. It is not the empty form of independence which they seek, but the reality. Is the British nation willing to concede that reality? If not, will the British resistance to concession of that reality be rendered more difficult or more easy by the concession of the form? I think it will be rendered vastly more difficult.¹

This struck at the foundations of all the proposals for concession since it was a denial of a possible balance between appearance and reality in Egypt's status. Churchill believed that any concession of form must surely lead to a demand for its substance. Echoing Montagu, he also felt that 'The repercussion of these proposals and their model upon other parts of the British Empire may be even more serious than their effect on Egypt.'² Churchill was particularly concerned about Ireland and India as he felt that this was a move away from 'the conception of the British Empire as a grouping of self-governing Dominions gathered together under the aegis of the Crown, developing under various degrees of responsibility within that circle.'³

Churchill's views were also shaped by a number of other factors. He spent part of the war at the Admiralty and then was Minister of Munitions. In 1919 he moved to the War Office. By temperament⁴ and position he was the natural spokesman for the Service Ministries' viewpoint.

There was remarkable identity of views which persisted even after Churchill became the Colonial Secretary.⁵ This most recent position confirmed Churchill's aggressive sense of Empire and his replacement by L. Worthington-Evans at the War Office gave him a willing ally in the Cabinet. Furthermore Churchill's appointment to the Colonial Office increased his interest in Egypt inasmuch as he hoped to bring

1. Idem.

2. Idem.

3. Idem.

4. Churchill believed in the vigorous use of force and on one occasion told Duff Cooper that 'you could only make concessions to people you had beaten.' Duff Cooper, op.cit., p.103.

5. For example, one memorandum circulated by the Air Force could have been written by Churchill. Commenting on the concession of nominal independence: '...is there not more than a possibility that to get rid of British occupation, rather than the achievement of independence, may once more speedily become the platform of Egyptian Nationalists of the future? For the present Lord Milner assures us that the extremists alone demand the complete removal of British troops: but who is to say that the future rule of the country may not be extremist in tendency?' Air Force Memorandum on the Future Status of Egypt, February 1921, FO/371/6297.

Egyptian affairs within its orbit, an aim he pursued with characteristic vigor.¹ Finally, Churchill's views were no doubt influenced by his Manchester constituency which would be adversely affected if Egyptian and Sudanese cotton were denied to the mills of Lancashire by a change in Egypt's status.² Thus Churchill became the most vocal opponent of change in Egypt and a source of particular dismay to some of his more moderate colleagues when he voiced his views outside the Cabinet.

Finally, during the period that preceded the arrival of the Egyptian delegation Lloyd George appears to have stood somewhat aloof from the debate on a settlement. Despite the usual flamboyant stories,³ he does not seem to have as yet taken a definite stand.

Lloyd George did give some indication of his views at the Imperial Cabinet on July 6, 1921. The Prime Minister declared that the government was not bound by the Milner scheme or the events surrounding it, but only by the text of the invitation to the Sultan: 'We say the Protectorate is not a satisfactory method. That is all we are committed to. We are therefore free.'⁴ As to the difficulties in defining a new relationship with Egypt, Lloyd George raised three points:

The first thing you come up against: Is Egypt to get foreign relations?....

The second point is: Foreign advisers - they [Egyptians] cannot really run their show without having outside advice, they are

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1. Beaverbrook writes of Churchill's struggle with Curzon over control of Egyptian affairs: 'Although Churchill's claim was defeated on February 4, 1921, it was not destroyed. The quarrel over Egypt became a continuing event....Many years after Churchill told me that he would have succeeded in seizing Egypt from Curzon's clutches if the Government had lived a little longer.' Beaverbrook, loc.cit.
 2. In a speech before the British Cotton Growing Association, June 6, 1921, which included the inflammatory statement about British armies being 'relegated to living upon condensed water on the banks of the Suez Canal while the mobs of Cairo and Alexandria made short work of the European and foreign populations,' Churchill also noted that changes in Egypt 'were matters of great consequence to Lancashire. Egyptian cotton was second only to that of the United States, and superior in quality.' Manchester Guardian, June 7, 1921.
 3. The most common was that when Adli finally arrived in London and called on Lloyd George, 'the British Prime Minister, professing to ignore the Egyptian demand for independence, pointed dramatically to a chair in the Imperial Conference room which he "invited Egypt to occupy as a valued member of British commonwealth of nations."' Chirol, Occident and Orient, p.95.
 4. Stenographic Notes..., July 6, 1921, p.11, FO/371/6301.

not sufficiently developed for it....

Then comes the third question....You have to protect your highway. It is a highway to Australia; it is a highway to the East. It is no use talking of Singapore if you cannot get to Singapore.¹

Lloyd George's concern for the difficulties entailed in the Milner proposals indicate the hard line he would take as the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations progressed. This was confirmed by his personal view that the above points 'are three very practical questions which go to the very root of the whole business, and upon those three things I do not think we should give way.'²

A Negotiating Position: Residency Alternatives

The Residency's approach towards policy was developing along somewhat different lines. Ostensibly the differences between London and Cairo were tactical since both ultimately sought to preserve Britain's vital interests. The difficulty lay in defining these interests and the manner in which they could best be secured. Allenby and his aides could support a policy in Cairo without the pressures that Curzon, for example, might feel in London. In addition, Allenby, the 'man on the spot', directed his attention to the means of policy, emphasising the practical aspects of its implementation rather than its formulation.³ His basic approach and how it was affected by his functions was clearly understood by Lindsay:

Lord Allenby has really two preoccupations; one, the ultimate future, as to which he is convinced that Milnerism is the only remedy; and the other and far more pressing one, the immediate future - how to keep Egypt quiet if negotiations fail or break down without calling on His Majesty's Government for a financial and military effort they must be unwilling to put forth.⁴

1. Ibid., pp.13-14.

2. Idem.

3. Milner noted in his diary that '...Allenby indeed seems neither to know nor to care about the future status of Egypt - He regards himself as there to discharge a definite temporary job, viz. - to "uphold the Protectorate"...and does not bother his head about constitutional or strictly political questions.' Entry for March 8, 1920, BLO, Milner Papers, Box 290. On the other hand, Colonel Meinertzhagen, an aide to Allenby in Palestine, was able to write in his diary for January 1, 1920, that 'I had a long talk with Allenby last night and our talk drifted into the far future; he thought the dissolution of the British Empire inevitable as the people we rule become more educated....' CRPO, Meinertzhagen Diaries, Vol. 21, p.129.

4. Lindsay, Minute, April 29, 1921, Allenby to Curzon, April 16, 1921, Desp. No. 311, FO/371/6295.

Allenby's commitment to Milner's proposals, despite some initial hesitation, was reported to Lloyd George as early as October 1920 by Hankey, the Cabinet Secretary. Allenby 'thinks we are absolutely committed to the main features of the scheme and that there is no getting away from it...'¹ The basis for this, according to Allenby, was that despite British denials the Milner proposals 'were from the first regarded by public opinion of Egypt in general as proposals which must eventually constitute a substantive offer by His Majesty's Government.'²

Allenby's views, however, were based on more than just Egyptian public opinion. The assumption that Britain's primary interest in the area was strategic and that this interest could essentially be secured by sea-power was the basis of Allenby's approach. Wavell, Allenby's aide in Egypt and later his biographer, commented that,

...it was his Allenby's firm conviction that our position in Egypt depended ultimately on our sea-power in the Mediterranean. So long as that was maintained we could afford to make all reasonable concessions to Egyptians, since we could control Egypt so long and so firmly as we controlled the Mediterranean.³

Another element in Allenby's approach was his appreciation of Britain's peculiar position in Egypt. Despite the Protectorate, he and his advisers had no formal executive power, but instead ruled through Egyptian ministers. Thus without a native government there could be no orderly civilian rule but only the clumsy apparatus of martial law. Allenby believed that 'A Ministry was essential or the

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1. M.P.A. Hankey to Lloyd George, October 22, 1920, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/24/3/18.
 2. Allenby to Curzon, January 12, 1921, Tel. No. 21, FO/371/6292.
 3. Wavell, op.cit., pp.54-55. This was the conventional military wisdom of the period. For example, one C.I.D. review noted that 'The maintenance of the superiority at sea of the naval forces of the British Empire over any combination of Powers liable to be arrayed against them must remain, as in the past, the basis of the system of Imperial Defence, for...by no other means can the integrity of the Empire and the security of British territory and trade be assured.' With regard to Egypt and British forces there, 'the force was kept at strength just sufficient to ensure the maintenance of internal order, and it was recognised that only in exceptional circumstances would it be available to resist invasion or raids from outside.' Committee of Imperial Defence, Survey of the Naval, Military and Air Obligations of the British Empire, Note to the Secretary, September 27, 1920, CID Paper 257-B, CAB/4/7.

entire machinery was threatened with collapse.'¹ A native government, however, was predicated upon a cooperative native elite.

Within this context the British in Cairo tended to divide political Egypt into two groups. One consisted 'of the landholding and official classes and the more educated and older members of the professions,' and the other 'chiefly of the Azharians, the students and the younger and less reflective members of the bar and the other professions.'² In order to maintain stability and to protect British interests, Allenby attempted to support, through concessions, a stable and moderate pro-British pasha class from the first group since the latter was more volatile and in any event generally attached itself to Zaghlul. Much that Allenby did in the years that followed independence was in pursuit of this goal. A corollary to this policy of support was the continuing concern lest any elements disturb the political equilibrium in Egypt, be it Zaghlul, in Allenby's view 'a man devoured of self-deceit,'³ or later the autocratic Fuad.

Despite his general approval of the Milner proposals, Allenby was aware that the talks might fail either because of opposition in England or because of unacceptable demands by the Egyptians. He therefore asked Amos and Patterson to investigate whether it was possible to 'return to a system of government similar to that which prevailed during the many years Lord Cromer was in Egypt,'⁴ as some had suggested. The findings led Allenby to restate his support of Milner's approach because,

Western ideas of autonomy and self-government, not to speak of independence, to which the great war gave so considerable an impetus, have gained too strong a hold on all sections of the community in Egypt for it to be possible for us to return to old time methods, or to look to the administrative devices employed by Lord Cromer for precedents, to guide us in our future

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1. Allenby, Report on Egypt for 1921, FO/371/7766. Wavell noted that Allenby 'might be spoken of as an administrator; but in actual fact he was more often concerned with "minister-ing" Egypt than with administering it.' Wavell, op. cit., pp.49-50.
 2. M.A. Amos, Memorandum, March 23, 1921, in Allenby to Curzon, April 16, 1921, Desp. No. 311, FO/371/6295. Amos here was discussing the division in Egypt in the event negotiations failed, but this division was standard.
 3. Allenby to Mother, April 29, 1921, KAP.
 4. Allenby to Curzon, April 16, 1921, Desp. No. 311, FO/371/6295.

actions.¹

The most important suggestion made by Allenby's advisers, particularly Amos, and forwarded to London with Allenby's approval, was the possibility of the unilateral application of a scheme similar to Milner's. Amos was convinced that 'any policy resting on the idea of overcoming the nationalist sentiments of the mass of people by measures of a purely economic kind is essentially chimerical.'² He therefore advocated the unilateral imposition of a settlement if the London talks failed.

The Foreign Office reaction to this new approach was ambivalent. Murray was afraid that the concession of independence in this way would be seen as a sign of weakness, but he admitted that despite the risks of the Amos plan 'I am unable to suggest a more satisfactory solution.'³ Lindsay, however, strongly objected that 'the essence of Milnerism is its bilateral nature, and as we are contemplating a position in which the Egyptians - the other party - will have run out, we cannot put Milnerism into operation alone.'⁴

Yet it was specifically the concept of some form of temporary or permanent unilateral action that was gaining ground at the Residency. On the eve of the negotiations Allenby despatched Sir William Hayter's proposal for the imposition of a

1. Idem. That the British advisers actually adopted this position is not surprising. Milner, in December 1919, noted in his diary the following conversation with Sir Paul Harvey, the Financial Adviser: '...it was apparent that his leaning was all in favour of handing more over to Native Control.' December 22, 1919, BLO, Milner Papers, Box 289. Clayton, despite his advocacy of annexation in 1917 (see Note by Brigadier General Clayton on the Political Status of Egypt, July 22, 1917, in Lloyd, op.cit., I, 262-67), supported drastic change in Egypt's status by 1919. Gertrude Bell noted in her diary on September 29, 1919 that 'In his [Clayton's] view our object should now be to guard (a) imperial necessities in Egypt (b) international interests for which we had made ourselves responsible, and let all the rest go....If however we refuse to take very bold liberal measures we shall create in Egypt an Oriental Ireland.' E. Burgoyne, Gertrude Bell: From Her Personal Papers, 1914-1926 (London, 1958), II, 112-13.
2. Amos, Memorandum, March 23, 1921 in Allenby to Curzon, April 16, 1921, Desp.No. 311, FO/371/6295. While disagreeing on some points, Patterson also believed concessions to native control to be vital. Noting Kitchener's policy of working through the natives, he wrote that it 'will be necessary for us...to carry his policy a step further, though on different lines.' Patterson, Memorandum, April 2, 1921, in ibid.
3. Murray, Minute, April 29, 1921, to ibid.
4. Lindsay, Minute, April 29, 1921, to ibid.

ten year modus vivendi in Anglo-Egyptian relations. Allenby now argued the strong possibility of a breakdown and the need for an alternative policy which could be enforced without preliminary agreement from the Egyptian side.¹

Negotiations

The Cabinet met to decide on its negotiating position only a few hours before the arrival of the Egyptian delegation in London on July 11. By then all recognised the impossibility of withholding nominal independence from Egypt. Nevertheless there was intense pressure inside and outside the Cabinet to restrict further concessions.² The result was a retreat from the Milner Memorandum in the crucial areas of troop distribution, foreign relations, and the judicial and financial control of Egypt's internal affairs.³ On that same day Curzon predicted the failure of the negotiations because the Egyptians 'are in such deadly terror of Zaghlul and his extremists...that they will decline anything.'⁴

The first session of the talks on July 13 disclosed the wide gap between the British and Egyptian positions. Curzon stated that 'Neither party were committed by the [Milner] Report or by anything that had gone before.'⁵ Britain was committed only by the language of the invitation to the Sultan. Adli Pasha, Prime Minister and President of the Egyptian delegation, countered Curzon's retreat from the Milner scheme by going beyond it and confirming his adherence to Zaghlul's "reserves": '...the delegation was bound to observe them, and intended to present them...in the

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1. Allenby to Curzon, June 17, 1921, Desp. No. 530, FO/371/6298. Hayter, whose Memorandum of June 5 was enclosed in the above Despatch, was Legal Adviser to the Ministry of Finance and to the Residency.
 2. Hughes of Australia and Massey of New Zealand were particularly vehement about this. See Stenographic Notes...July 6, 1921, passim and Stenographic Notes...July 11, 1921, passim in FO/371/6301. Within the Cabinet, Churchill, while willing by now to concede nominal independence, wanted such strong treaty guarantees for all aspects of Britain's position in Egypt that he remarked: 'I am pretty sure that Adli Pasha and his delegation will not be able to agree to this.' Stenographic Notes...July 6, 1921, p.17 in ibid.
 3. Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 58(21), July 11, 1921, CAB/23/26.
 4. Stenographic Notes...July 11, 1921, p.2, FO/371/6301.
 5. Minutes of the First Conference with the Egyptian Official Delegation held at the Foreign Office, July 13, 1921, p.1, FO/371/6310.

actual form in which they had been drawn up.'¹

The two delegations met eight times during July and August. They discussed the formal abolition of the protectorate, conditions for the retention of British troops in Egypt, the conduct of Egypt's foreign affairs, the roles of the Financial and Judicial Advisers, the substitution of British for international authority in capitulatory matters, compensation for foreign officials and the title of the High Commissioner.

By the end of August there was agreement only on the abolition of the protectorate, and a stalemate on everything else.² In the matter of British troops: Curzon called for their disposition in the interior with access to all facilities; the Egyptians insisted on their concentration near the Canal. On foreign affairs: Curzon conceded an Egyptian Ministry for Foreign Affairs as had existed before 1914 but, at the Cabinet's behest, so hedged this concession that it was meaningless. Each country would be represented in the other's capital by a High Commissioner, close consultation on foreign affairs would be required by treaty, Egypt would not conclude any agreement without prior discussion with Britain, and she would be represented abroad by British diplomats. Adli and the delegation rejected the title 'High Commissioner' as a vestige of the protectorate and insisted on full freedom in foreign affairs, including the appointment of Ministers, provided that 'The Egyptian Government will not enter into any political agreement with foreign Powers prejudicial to Great Britain.'³

In the other major area of contention, Britain's continued control of Egypt's administration: Curzon insisted on a Financial Commissioner who would inherit the duties of the Commissioners of the Debt as well as oversee the budgets of the Mixed Courts and of the Financial and Judicial Commissioners and their staffs, and the payment of pensions and annuities to foreign officials. He would be kept fully informed of all financial matters, with access to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, and he would have an effective veto over external loans and the

1. Ibid., p.2.

2. A survey of the two positions, clause by clause, together with further concessions proposed by Curzon to the Cabinet, is found in tabular form in Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 85(21), Appendix, November 3, 1921, CAB/23/27.

3. Ibid.

assignment of public revenue. The Egyptian delegation instead proposed the appointment of a British Commissioner of the Debt who could be consulted but without 'power to intervene in the financial administration of the country.'¹ Curzon similarly called for the appointment of a Judicial Commissioner to oversee the administration of law as it affected foreigners and who would be kept informed by the relevant ministries. The Egyptians, in turn, proposed that for five years following the effective date of a treaty the Commandants of the Police in Cairo, Alexandria and Port Said be European.

The cause of the impasse was essentially a question of trust. The Egyptians believed that true independence should be based on the belief that a native administration could successfully supervise the country's military, fiscal, judicial and foreign affairs. Curzon and his colleagues felt that Egypt had not yet earned untrammelled independence and that meanwhile its prerogatives should be reserved to Britain because of her interests and obligations in the area. An angry Curzon confirmed this approach in his comment that:

The delegation seemed to assume that they had won their independence. They had done nothing of the kind. His Majesty's Government were anxious to give it to them, but they had not won it by their own exertions.²

The impasse continued in London while agitation increased in Egypt due to Zaghlul's activities and a tour in September by British Labour Members of Parliament sympathetic to the Wafd. In light of this, Allenby who was in London urged that his policy of suppressing sources of instability while supporting sympathetic moderates be aggressively pursued. In this connection, he told Crowe,

that if we do not now break Zaghlul, he will break us and this is Zaghlul's object. The Egyptian government...are entitled to call for our effective support and, if we do not give it, their's and the Sultan's days will be numbered.³

1. Ibid.

2. Minutes of the Fifth Conference with the Egyptian Official Delegation, held at the Foreign Office, July 29, 1921, p.45, FO/371/6310.

3. Crowe, Minute, October 1, 1921, to Scott to Curzon, September 30, 1921, Tel. No. 565, FO/371/6305.

While Allenby was advocating firm measures, the Residency sought a new or modified approach. Indications of this could be seen in the official and private correspondence from Cairo. A personal letter from Walford Selby, the First Secretary, shows the direction of the developing approach. Selby saw two alternatives: either the imposition of policy by force or still greater concessions. Since the British public might object to harsh measures and because of the difficult economic situation in Britain, Selby noted that there might be a need to 'take the opportunity proffered by the negotiations...to "get out" on the best terms we can.'¹ As for the future, 'We won India through the initiative of a private company; I have hopes we could still have considerable voice in the direction of Egyptian affairs through those Englishmen who would remain behind.'² Adopting Allenby's approach to seapower, Selby felt that troops in the Canal area together with a British 'Monroe Doctrine' for Egypt would be sufficient to provide strategic security in view of the 'British naval preponderance in the Mediterranean.'³

Clayton, at the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior, held similar views. Commenting on Hayter's proposed modus vivendi, he called for the concentration of troops near the Canal. He argued that the object of a British force was to prevent external aggression which, realistically, could come only from Europe after a major war had begun, preceded by preparations in Egypt and elsewhere. Given these circumstances and the inevitable military build-up in Egypt before the outbreak of war, Clayton felt that 'it is not easy to see how the presence of a relatively small permanent garrison in the interior of Egypt would greatly affect the issues,'⁴ whereas it would negate Egyptian independence and arouse local hostility. Clayton believed that the deadlock might be ended by the creation of a well-organised force of British constables who could better protect foreigners than an army in the interior. This would also relieve the British government 'of a military commitment and a large item of expenditure...'⁵

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1. Selby to Tyrrell, October 1, 1921, FO/371/6306. Scott, the Minister Plenipotentiary and the Acting High Commissioner raised the same questions about Britain's ability to maintain a repressive policy by military means. Scott to Curzon, October 10, 1921, Desp. No. 882, FO/371/6306.
 2. Selby to Tyrrell, October 1, 1921, FO/371/6306.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Sir Gilbert Clayton, Memorandum, October 8, 1921, SAD, Clayton Papers, 470/13, p.2.
 5. Ibid.

Allenby's cautious reactions to these suggestions indicate how rapidly the British officials in Cairo were in fact moving:

The future of the country depends on whether the Turkish aristocracy, with our support, can make good. This police force, if accepted, should be a strong weapon in their hands....We must first see if the Pasha class can establish a firm government; and we must slip gradually into the new constitution, taking no risks. We must be sure that the faction of Zaghlul is crushed before we move a man from Egypt.¹

Both a letter from Scott, the Acting High Commissioner, and the Foreign Office reactions show the developing views of those most closely connected with Egyptian affairs.² Concerned that the activities of Zaghlul and the Labour delegation in Egypt would prevent Adli from reaching any agreement, Scott again raised the possibility of unilateral British action. Noting Theodore Roosevelt's advice given twenty years earlier of 'Either govern or get out,' he was convinced that the British position had deteriorated during the two years of talk 'and if we talk for another year we shall be worse off still and may eventually be fired out, bag and baggage, with nothing to the credit side.'³ The alternatives were to adopt concessions and enforce them or to withdraw to the Canal leaving Egypt internally independent. If the former policy were adopted, Scott warned of chronic hostility and of the need for assurances that Ireland, finances or troop requirements elsewhere would not affect the British position in Egypt. Since such assurances could not be given, Scott advocated withdrawal to the Canal. He further advised that if this proposal, formulated together with Amos and Clayton, proved acceptable, it should be carried out before Adli's departure from London rather than have Zaghlul force this move later.

At this point opinions in the Egyptian Department were becoming more flexible. Duff Cooper noted in his diary that 'Murray and I are coming round to the view that it is worth making far greater concessions than have yet been contemplated in order to secure an agreement with Egypt.'⁴ Reacting to Scott's proposal, they commented that Britain's goal was not to 'govern'. Her aim was a 'prosperous Egypt under a native Government which could be relied upon to look only to Great Britain for

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1. Allenby Note to Foreign Office, October 22, 1921, FO/371/6306.
 2. Scott to Lindsay, September 30, 1921, FO/371/6305.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Entry for October 12, 1921. Duff Cooper, op.cit., p.105.

assistance, protection and advice,¹ to be achieved through mutual agreement.

The question remained: How to achieve mutual agreement? To this end, Murray and Cooper outlined Britain's irreducible requirements beyond which all else might be conceded: British forces at the Canal; troops in Alexandria for a specified period only; a veto over foreign appointments to the Egyptian civil service; continuation of the status quo in the Sudan; compensation for foreign officials; an act of indemnity for the period of martial law; and, payment of the interest on the Ottoman loans secured by Egyptian tribute. If these were secured then a 'Monroe Doctrine' for Egypt would prevent interference.

The risk involved in this policy, according to its advocates, was its rejection by Adli. The concessions might thus become the basis for even more extreme demands by the Nationalists, while Britain would still have to rule Egypt by force of arms. In addition, such concessions, if accepted, might lead to a decline in administrative and public order in Egypt. Still there was a strong possibility that these concessions could lead to an agreement. Considering the dangers of wider concessions as opposed to the risk entailed in the failure of the London talks, the Egyptian Department believed that 'Of the two, the former would seem the less formidable.'²

Lindsay also favoured wider concessions. He nevertheless continued to oppose unilateral British action since it would require the 'wider and wider use of martial law until all authority will rest undisguisedly on British bayonets and what government may exist will be merely what the Englishmen can provide.'³ He was convinced that conditions in England and Egypt ruled out repression which would lead to ultimate disaster. Fearing a breakdown of the negotiations, he supported Murray's and Cooper's proposal since it 'safeguards our Imperial interests and our predominance in Egypt as compared with other foreign powers.'⁴

Curzon, apparently swayed by his advisers, proposed further concessions to the Cabinet on October 20. Based largely on the Murray-Cooper Memorandum of October 14, he urged the retention of British troops in the interior for one year, thereafter to be reviewed, and the granting to Egypt of the right to conduct her foreign affairs

1. A.D. Cooper and J. Murray, Memorandum: Egyptian Negotiations, October 14, 1921, FO/371/6305.

2. Ibid.

3. R.C. L[indsay], Minute, October 15, 1921, FO/371/6305.

4. Ibid.

through Egyptian ministers in close consultation with Britain. Britain's representative in Cairo would be the only 'Ambassador' accredited to Egypt and would have precedence over other foreign diplomats.¹

Impasse and Failure

Faced with strong objections in the Cabinet, Curzon displayed what one biographer called 'a surprising diffidence in pressing his views against opposition.'² This was, however, entirely in keeping with his general demeanour in the Cabinet, and, aware of the strength of the opposition, he gloomily wrote his wife that 'the Cabinet [is] all much stiffer than I am in the matter, and I am sure we shall have an absolute rupture with another Ireland in Egypt.'³ Even more alarming was Lloyd George's sudden intervention. Duff Cooper noted that the Prime Minister 'says it is time he put his foot down somewhere and he has chosen Egypt for the operation.'⁴ The Cabinet deferred a decision and appointed a sub-committee on Egypt consisting of Churchill, Worthington-Evans and H.A.L. Fisher, with Curzon in the chair.

The Cabinet Sub-Committee met on October 24, with Allenby present, to discuss the military situation and the prospects in Egypt if the talks failed. Churchill again expressed adamant opposition to any concessions on troops, while Curzon called for the transfer of most of the troops to the Canal Zone after the lapse of a peaceful year, with the remainder stationed in barracks several miles outside Cairo and Alexandria.

Allenby was curiously indecisive, reminiscent of his poor showing at wartime staff conferences, which bode ill for his future relations with the Cabinet. Although he hedged on a withdrawal from the interior as proposed by Curzon, he did however comment that despite the likely failure of the negotiations 'the principle of independence for Egypt should be acknowledged.'⁵

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1. Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 81(21), October 29, 1921, CAB/23/27.
 2. Zetland, . op.cit., III, 250.
 3. Curzon to Lady Curzon, October 21, 1921, in ibid., p.248.
 4. Entry in diary for October 21, 1921, Duff Cooper, Loc.cit.
 5. Cabinet Sub-Committee on the Situation in Egypt, Minutes, October 14, 1921, FO/371/6306.

In the meantime the Residency continued to press for the unilateral imposition of the concessions offered to Adli in the event the talks broke down.¹

The Cabinet again discussed Curzon's proposals. Curzon noted that he made them reluctantly and only because his hand had been forced by the publication of the Milner Report. He justified them on the grounds that there would be no immediate reduction of troops and that in the future the Navy could protect the Canal. But the immediate risk of an uprising in Egypt because independence had not been granted was too great and would require an additional twenty-four battalions to suppress. Lloyd George forcefully intervened and noted that 'he had found himself committed to proposals which he did not approve and he had been trying to extricate the Government from the difficult situation in which it has been placed.'² He opposed any real concessions beyond those already agreed upon. Allenby again displayed little vigorous support for concessions.³

When the Cabinet met again the following day, November 4, after commenting on the military situation, Allenby remarked that he favoured Curzon's proposals, but incredibly diluted this support with the comment that 'he could not advise on this point with confidence.'⁴ Lloyd George carried the Cabinet and further concessions were rejected. According to Duff Cooper, the one point on which all were agreed was 'their contempt for Allenby, who had apparently been very weak in the Cabinet.'⁵

1. Scott to Curzon, October 27, 1921, Tel. No. — , FO/371/6306.
2. Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 85(21), November 3, 1921, CAB/23/27. By now even H.A.L. Fisher, previously a 'Milnerite', was wavering. Torn between doubts about concessions which he felt 'would appear to be a confession of weakness' and the possibility of a break on the issue resulting in an Egyptian version of the Irish 'troubles', Fisher wrote: 'All I am concerned with is to send Redmond back with a good offer for fear that we may have to deal with a Michael Collins.' Fisher to Lloyd George, October 28, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/16/7/72.
3. Afterwards Duff Cooper noted in his diary, November 4, that 'Allenby thinks this [opposition to concessions] is disastrous. It is largely his fault for not having spoken up to Cabinet in favour of concessions.' Duff Cooper, loc. cit.
4. Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 86(21), November 4, 1921, CAB/23/27.
5. Cooper heard the results of the Cabinet meeting at dinner with Montagu and Churchill at Breccles on November 5. Duff Cooper, op.cit., p.106. As for Allenby's astonishing diffidence, Wavell commented on his 'comparative silence and ineffectiveness at the periodical conferences of Army Commanders....He was not a ready debater; his mind, like a battleship, was powerful and weighty, but required space and time to turn or manoeuvre.' Wavell, op.cit., p.25. Allenby appeared to be temperamentally unsuited for the sharp and often superficial cut and thrust that characterised Cabinet discussion.

A breakdown in the negotiations was now inevitable. The first session of the talks had revealed the distance between the two sides. Zaghlul's continued influence in Egypt made it impossible for Adli to move from the 'reserves' to the Milner Memorandum, while the Cabinet decision of November 4 confirmed the inflexibility of the British position. On November 10 Curzon handed Adli the British draft convention formulated according to the Cabinet decision and Adli gave the anticipated Egyptian rejection to Curzon on November 15. Two days later Curzon cabled Allenby, who had returned to Egypt, that the talks had failed and followed this with a long explanatory despatch on November 19.¹

After the failure of the talks, Whitehall took one final step. London's last gesture, the consequences of which were unforeseen, was a note to the Sultan delivered on December 3. The decision to send this note was reached at a Conference of Ministers held on November 18 and attended by Lloyd George and every other major Cabinet figure including Curzon.²

The language and content of the Note humiliated the Egyptians. On the one hand, Egypt was reminded in magisterial tones that 'It is not wise for her people to overlook these facts of Egypt's prosperity or forget to whom they are owed,' while, on the other hand, the Egyptians were sternly rebuked because the 'delegation made little practical advance towards recognition of the British Empire's just title... exclusive rights and responsibilities' in the area of Egypt's administration, finances, judicial system and foreign relations.³ After noting that concessions would not be implemented 'without the consent and cooperation of the Egyptian nation,' that is, by agreement, it concluded with a lecture on the dangers of extreme nationalism:

His Majesty's Government do not consider that they would be consulting Egypt's welfare by making concessions to agitation of this kind: and Egypt will make no progress until her responsible leaders show the will and strength to put it down. The world is suffering in many places at the present time from the cult of a fanatical and purely disruptive type of nationalism. His Majesty's Government will set their face against it as firmly in Egypt as elsewhere. Those who

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1. Curzon to Allenby, November 17, 1921, Tel. No. 502, FO/371/6307; and, Curzon to Allenby, November 19, 1921, Desp. No. 1255, C.P. 3505, CAB/24/131.
 2. Present were Lloyd George, Curzon, Montagu, Worthington-Evans, Birkenhead, Churchill and Sir Robert Horne. Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 92(21), December 12, 1921, CAB/23/27.
 3. Allenby to Sultan Ahmad Fuad, December 3, 1921, p.2, FO/371/6307.

yield to it only make more necessary and so prolong the maintenance of those foreign sanctions which they denounce.¹

According to most observers, the Note was an error of judgement, written in the spirit of irritation and hectoring tone evident in the final session of the London talks.² The Note's authorship was later disputed, presumably because of the extreme hostility it unwittingly aroused in Egypt. Chirol, one of Lloyd George's severest critics, claimed that the Note was 'drafted on the opposite side of Downing Street and merely sent across to the Foreign Office for transmission to Cairo over Lord Curzon's reluctant signature...'³ Curzon's biographer, Harold Nicolson, similarly tried to absolve Curzon of responsibility, claiming that the Note 'had not even been drafted in the Foreign Office. The draft was prepared in the secretariat of Mr. Lloyd George.'⁴

While it is true that Lloyd George played an active role in preparing the document, Curzon did have a share of the responsibility for its contents. The decision to send a note was taken in the presence of both and the Cabinet Committee's formal resolution was that Curzon, 'in consultation with the Prime Minister,' should send a policy statement to the Sultan.⁵ The actual composition of the Note appears to have been a joint effort with both Lloyd George and Curzon personally amending its language.⁶ Not only was there little evident reluctance at the Foreign Office over the Note's transmission, but care was taken that it be presented on a Saturday 'thereby ensuring the document's publication in the Sunday papers.'⁷

1. Ibid.

2. Chirol called the Note 'notorious'. Chirol, 'Lloyd Georgian Foreign Policy,' Edin. Rev., 237 (Jan. 1923), p.4. On the other side of the political spectrum, George Lloyd noted that its only purpose seemed to be 'that of venting an undignified but not unnatural irritation.' Lloyd, op.cit., II, 51.

3. Chirol, loc. cit.

4. Nicolson, op.cit., pp.178-9.

5. Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 92(21), December 12, 1921, CAB/23/27.

6. The following minute was attached to the amended draft: 'On leaving the F.O. Sir Edward Grigg got the Prime Minister to read the draft letter of Lord Allenby to the Sultan explaining to him the changes you [Curzon] desired. In these the Prime Minister concurred, and in his turn he put forward a couple of amendments as shown in the annexed print.' R.C.L[indsay] to Curzon, November 23, 1921, FO/371/6307.

7. Curzon to Allenby, November 29, 1921, Tel. No. 517, FO/371/6308. This was on the advice of Murray and Crowe, Minutes, November 28, 1921 to Allenby to Curzon, November 28, 1921, Tel. No. 645, FO/371/6308.

While it was not the Note's purpose to confirm the rigidity of British policy, this was its major achievement and it increased Allenby's difficulties in administering Egypt through a cooperative native ministry and maintaining order in the face of Zaghlul's political activity.

CHAPTER FIVE: INDEPENDENCE

Despite the finality of the breakdown of the London talks, the struggle between London and Cairo for control of British policy had only just begun. The first signs of this struggle were already evident two days after the Anglo-Egyptian talks ended in failure on November 15. These signs indicated the direction the struggle would take in the future.

Unilateralism and New Negotiations

On November 17 Allenby cabled that the principal British advisers - Financial, Judicial, Interior and Education - were unanimous in the view that,

...a decision which does not admit principle of Egyptian independence and which maintains protectorate must entail serious risk of revolution throughout the country and in any case result in complete administrative chaos, rendering Government impossible.¹

If the choice was the unilateral declaration of Egypt's independence or possible disorder and chaos, Allenby's advisers supported independence in the strongest terms, going so far as to state that if a contrary policy were adopted, 'they cannot expect to retain the confidence of Egyptian Ministers or be able to render useful service in the future.'² This veiled threat to resign became an increasingly important weapon in the disagreement over policy.

The Foreign Office exhibited surprise at this expression of the advisers' views which Allenby had forwarded to London with his tacit approval, since he had been a participant in the Cabinet discussions and was present when all major decisions were made. Allenby was, therefore, directed to support government policy and 'to defend very ample concessions which they [Cabinet] were prepared to make.'³

At the same time, there were contacts in Egypt to investigate the possibility

1. Allenby to Curzon, November 17, 1921, Tel. No. 629, FO/371/6307.
2. Ibid.
3. Curzon to Allenby, November 18, 1921, Tel. No. 503, FO/371/6307.

of forming a new ministry. Allenby informed London on November 18 that Tharwat Pasha, deputising for Adli as Prime Minister in the latter's absence, believed Adli's resignation was inevitable. Tharwat was willing to form a government since he believed that it was 'all-important to keep together supporters of Government, in order to counter influence of Zaghloul. He [Tharwat] is prepared to fight Zaghloul to a finish, and is confident of success.'¹ These were sentiments with which Allenby had associated himself on many occasions.

Adli returned to Egypt on December 5 and Allenby cabled Curzon that as a result of the December 3 Note he doubted whether a viable native government could be maintained. Any ministry formed under existing conditions would be unstable and 'liable to drift without proper control on our part.'²

In spite of the failure of the London talks, Allenby felt that Britain should not hesitate to put into effect unilaterally the concessions previously offered as part of a treaty. While the December 3 Note seemed to rule out action without Egypt's 'consent and cooperation,' Allenby and his advisers now believed that amenable Egyptian leaders should be consulted to find the means necessary to implement the policy previously considered during the negotiations. Allenby therefore requested permission to inform the Sultan, at his discretion, that the British government was prepared to implement the major provisions of the draft treaty. This would then serve as a programme for the present ministry or its successor. Not only would this ensure British interests and advance Egyptian independence, according to Allenby, but it would also give the Egyptians responsibility for their own administration. This was one of Allenby's major concerns since,

No one conversant with recent developments in the administration of the country can remain blind to the great drawback under which we are labouring owing to prevailing system of dual obligation which enables Ministry to secure the credit for all that is successful in the administration of the country and to place the blame for mistakes, if they occur, on the shoulders of the British authorities.³

So the debate moved from the content of the concessions to the question of whether those concessions should be imposed unilaterally despite their earlier rejection by the Egyptian delegation.

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1. Allenby to Curzon, November 18, 1921, Tel. No. 631, FO/371/6307.
 2. Allenby to Curzon, December 5, 1921, Tel. No. 656, FO/371/6308.
 3. Ibid.

The Foreign Office, distant from the pressure of Egypt's day-to-day administration, reacted sharply to Allenby's proposals. Murray was now unimpressed by Allenby's overriding concern for a stable administration and commented that his 'proposal amounts in fact to giving away all that the Cabinet were with difficulty induced to concede...and receiving nothing in return except the formation of a Government of whose stability or good faith we should have no guarantee.'¹ Crowe noted that this proposal had been specifically rejected and 'If we did this now, we should be stultifying ourselves absolutely.'²

In addition to these considerations, Curzon also raised a domestic political difficulty - Lloyd George's pledge that no action would be taken without the House of Commons' approval. Curzon, in his minute to Allenby's cable, argued against 'precipitate action', preferring to wait for Parliament to reconvene in February, by which time Ireland's likely incorporation into the Empire might have a salutary effect on Egypt.³ He therefore informed Allenby that the question should be held in abeyance and instead proposed a programme for an Egyptian government: maintain order; enact indemnity legislation to permit the end of martial law; return to constitutional rule with elections; and, 'Egyptianise' the civil service. In return Curzon held out the promise of more concessions after Egypt 'has proved her capacity for self-government.'⁴

Allenby replied on December 11 to Curzon's restatement of the British position. His view was that the conditions of Curzon's programme, especially in the areas of public order and the termination of martial law, were either too vague or had already been conditionally promised by Allenby. In the strongest terms he urged London to commit itself publicly to a policy of independence to be vigorously pursued in Parliament. The idea of a treaty 'must be definitely abandoned' since 'no Egyptian whatever his opinions may be, can put his signature to any document which

1. Murray Minute, 6.12.21 to ibid.
2. E.A.C[roWE], Minute, 6.12.21 to ibid.
3. C[urzon], Minute, 7.12.21 to ibid. As early as 1919 Curzon was critical of Allenby's preoccupation with the formation of a native ministry to the exclusion of larger issues: 'Allenby is misjudging the situation in its wider aspect, and that he believes the only thing to do is to get a native Ministry into power, whatever the price we have to pay for it.' Curzon to Balfour, April 1, 1919, Balfour Papers, FO/800/216.
4. Curzon to Allenby, December 8, 1921, Tel. No. 529, FO/371/6308.

does not in his view involve complete independence.'¹ After attempting to reassure Curzon about Egypt's ability to control her own foreign affairs, Allenby reverted to the key issue dividing the British in London and Cairo, namely, that the 'Difficulties of British administration under protectorate policy do not seem to me to have received consideration they deserve.'²

London reacted with hostility. Murray tartly observed that it was not really necessary to give Allenby a conditional pledge of independence 'which he could then proceed to hawk round amongst potential Egyptian prime ministers.'³ Crowe was confused by Allenby's earlier behaviour in London and sharply enquired whether 'the telegram has been drafted and submitted to him by one of the officials who have always favoured the undiluted Milner doctrine and who now want to make it impossible for H.M.G. to follow any other.'⁴ These sentiments, hostility towards Allenby and suspicion of a staff that presumed to encourage his stubborn opposition to Foreign Office policy, recurred frequently from this point on and coloured relations between London and Cairo.

Allenby formally learned of Adli's resignation on December 11 when Tharwat, at the Sultan's suggestion, met Allenby and outlined his programme for a new ministry. This entailed a rejection of the British note to Adli containing the draft treaty, but recognition of the 'undertaking of the British government to terminate protectorate and to recognise Egypt as a sovereign state.'⁵ Egypt would then prove, through her good behaviour, that additional guarantees were not required to safeguard British interests. In addition, the new government would undertake to restore constitutional rule and would re-establish a Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Allenby explained that Tharwat did not expect immediate independence but rather its prospect in the near future. Tharwat made the formation of a new ministry conditional on Britain's approval of this programme which Allenby supported as an act of courage in view of general Egyptian resentment after the Note of December 3.⁶

1. Allenby to Curzon, December 11, 1921, Tel. No. 664, FO/371/6308.

2. Ibid.

3. Murray, Minute, 12.12.21, to ibid.

4. E.A.C[roWE], Minute, 12.12.21 to ibid.

5. Allenby to Curzon, December 12, 1921, Tel. No. 665, FO/371/6308.

6. Allenby to Curzon, December 12, 1921, Tel. No. 666, FO/371/6308.

Curzon, in what was later described as 'drifting with a vengeance',¹ accepted the general lines of Tharwat's programme but stipulated that 'His Majesty's Government have given no "undertaking" to terminate protectorate...but merely offered to do so as part of contract.'² Without realizing that he was destroying the basis of the proposal he had accepted, Curzon asked Allenby to persuade Tharwat to substitute the word 'offer' for 'undertaking' in his programme. In a later cable dealing with Allenby's proposal for unilateral action, Curzon persisted in his view that unilateralism was still 'quite unacceptable.'³ It is apparent that the Foreign Office and the Residency were working at cross-purposes. Curzon seemed to have believed that he was continuing the London talks at long distance, while Allenby was striking out in a new direction - the immediate undertaking of Egypt's independence.

Garbled reports in the British press concerning events in Egypt and the lack of news from Cairo since December 12 led Sir Eyre Crowe, in Curzon's absence at Cannes, to make private enquiries from Allenby regarding developments in Cairo.⁴ The High Commissioner replied on December 20 that because of Adli's reluctance to support his colleague, Tharwat, the latter would not form a government in spite of the possibility of British assent to his programme.⁵ In order to counteract the effects of Wafd agitation and to strengthen Tharwat's nerve, Allenby also informed London of his decision to ban a public meeting scheduled by Zaghlul for December 23. If Zaghlul's activities could not be ended in this way, Allenby grimly noted that 'I am ready to deal with him.'⁶

1. Lloyd, op.cit., II, 54.

2. Curzon to Allenby, December 15, 1921, Tel. No. 534, FO/371/6308.

3. Curzon to Allenby, December 15, 1921, Tel. No. 536, FO/371/6308.

4. Crowe to Allenby, December 19, 1921, Private Tel., FO/371/6308.

5. Allenby later described the role played by Adli and the Sultan in preventing Tharwat from forming a government: '...it transpired that he [Tharwat] had been forbidden by the Sultan to disclose his programme in Egypt....He was specially embarrassed by denial of support from Adli Pasha, who was still regarded as leader of the party...' Allenby, Report on Egypt for the Year 1921, p.13, FO/371/7766. Gerald Delaney, long-time Reuters correspondent in Cairo, later wrote of Allenby's opinion of Adli in a private note to Wavell: 'Allenby was wrong in describing Adly "as crooked as a ram's horn," but he was right when he referred to him as "the broken reed".' G. Delaney, Memorandum for General Sir Archibald Wavell, May 2, 1940, KAP.

6. Allenby to Crowe, December 20, 1921, no number, FO/371/6308.

Circumstances forced Allenby to act on his threat. The decision to ban Zaghlul's public meeting was followed by violence with one British soldier killed and another wounded on December 20. As a result seven Wafd leaders were ordered to their homes under police guard and banned from further political activities. Zaghlul and a number of his associates openly defied Allenby who then ordered the arrest of Zaghlul and three of his supporters and their deportation, preferably to Ceylon, where Urabi was exiled after his defeat in 1882.¹ Allenby was convinced that 'With Zaghloul in the country peace and quiet could never be expected and no progress could be made.'²

Although the arrest and deportation of the Wafd leaders resulted in violence and strikes, the situation was quickly brought under control by Allenby's vigorous measures and soon Curzon would tersely note that 'We had got off more cheaply than I had expected.'³ Allenby at this point was quietly confident about the prospects for the future upon which he expanded in a letter to his mother:

The arrest of Zaghloul caused a considerable flare-up; but the fire has now almost burnt out and I have great hopes for the future. I don't expect to be able to form another Ministry, for a week or so; but I am carrying on, for the time, without one.

It won't do to hurry things. I want stable and sound Ministry, when it comes.

All the best Egyptians are on my side; in reality, if not openly.

I am making no concessions to my opponents, but I am conciliatory to those who are inclined to be friendly; and I am on good terms with all our old supporters.⁴

Despite Allenby's confidence there still was no ministry and Egypt's volatile political atmosphere lent urgency to the search for a new government. During the

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1. Allenby made it clear that he suggested Ceylon because of its association with Urabi. Allenby to Foreign Office, December 23, 1921, Tel. No. 680, FO/371/6308. London had the same reaction. In reply to Montagu's letter of December 29, 1921, in which he expressed concern about Zaghlul's proximity to India and its large Muslim minority, Curzon explained the choice of Ceylon: 'The precedent of Arabi Pasha was in everyone's mind.' Curzon to Montagu, December 30, 1921, Curzon Papers, FO/800/153.
 2. Allenby to Foreign Office, December 23, 1921, Tel. No. 680, FO/371/6308.
 3. Curzon to Lloyd George, 28.12.21, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/12/12/63.
 4. Allenby to Mother, December 29, 1921, KAP.

last week of December and the first week of January, Allenby, through Selby,¹ investigated Adli's and Tharwat's terms for a new government. Collaboration was so close that Allenby's decision, similar to the one taken in 1919, to confer ministerial powers on the predominantly British under-secretaries was made at Tharwat's and Adli's suggestion.

The talks continued until January 12 when Allenby informed Curzon that Tharwat had submitted a strong and representative list of Cabinet members and that a government programme had been agreed upon.² Allenby therefore requested permission to present a note to the Sultan which would be made public with the formation of a ministry. The aim of the draft note would be to emphasise the conciliatory aspects of the December 3 note, end misrepresentation of the aims of the British draft treaty, explain British policy towards Zaghlul, express the 'friendly intentions' of the British government, and accept the main points of Tharwat's programme, especially independence, while reserving for subsequent negotiations matters affecting Britain's vital interests.

Allenby's draft note consisted of thirteen paragraphs, the first nine of which explained the background of British policy, while the last four were based on the premise that the British government 'are prepared to recommend to British parliament, without waiting for conclusion of a treaty, abolition of protectorate and recognition of Egypt as an independent sovereign state.'³ However, there would be reservations in the areas of (a) security of Imperial communications; (b) the defence of Egypt; (c) protection of foreign interests and minorities; and, (d) the Sudan. Allenby asked that this draft letter be authorised without modification since he shared his advisers' conviction 'that there is no other means of maintaining friendly disposition of those [favourable] political elements in Egypt ...and of assuaging hostility of others, than to give this pledge regarding abolition

1. Selby later wrote in his memoirs that 'I had been the chief negotiator of that momentous departure of policy in Egypt under Lord Allenby's instructions for a treaty with Egypt.' Sir Walford Selby, Diplomatic Twilight, 1930-40 (London, 1953), p.133. This is confirmed in Allenby to Curzon, December 27, 1921, Tel. No. 692, FO/371/6309.
2. Allenby to Curzon, January 12, 1922, Tel. Nos. 17-18, FO/371/7730.
3. Allenby to Curzon, January 12, 1922, Tel. No. 19, FO/371/7730.

of protectorate. I am equally convinced that this is the moment to give it.'¹

At this point, the members of the Foreign Office Egyptian Department supported Allenby. Murray felt that a temporary euphoria had settled over Egypt and, if ignored, such an opportunity would not return. However, as in 1918-19, Britain's leaders were occupied elsewhere. Curzon was at Cannes and a delay in approving Allenby's policy meant, according to Murray, that 'what would now be regarded as a "beau geste" will be hailed as a symptom of weakness.'² Lindsay was also impressed by the urgency of the situation. Despite earlier rejection of Allenby's proposal, he preferred it to what he felt was the only alternative, the rapid deterioration of affairs in Egypt.³

Crowe's comment provided the only dissenting note. He was harshly critical of Allenby's behaviour, believing that he 'is to blame for trying to rush H.M.G. in this way.' Furthermore, despite Crowe's reluctance to oppose 'those who speak with intimate knowledge of Egyptian conditions and Egyptian psychosis,' he opposed giving up Britain's only formal lever of power in Egypt and relying solely on the use of military force.⁴ Allenby's cables were finally sent to Curzon and Crowe informed the High Commissioner that while an early decision would be sought, 'you will realise that with the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at Cannes an immediate reply on so important a matter cannot be sent.'⁵

Churchill, having seen copies of Allenby's cables, fiercely opposed his 'feverish haste' and reminded Lloyd George of his parliamentary pledges on Egypt. He added, no doubt with the Milner Report in mind, that 'I hope you will allow

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1. Allenby to Curzon, January 12, 1922, Tel. No. 18, FO/371/7730. Allenby's optimism was based, in part, on his belief that the Wafd was breaking up. He informed Curzon of expected secessions on the same day. Allenby to Curzon, January 12, 1922, Tel. No. 20, C.P. 3614, CAB/24/132. Allenby then privately cabled Curzon that 'I count on you to see that my proposals are accepted. If they go through I believe that we are far on the road to a settlement of Egyptian problem. If they are rejected I consider that finest opportunity that we have ever had will have been missed. I do not think that such an opportunity will occur again.' Allenby to Curzon, January 12, 1922, private and personal, Curzon Papers, FO/800/153.
 2. Murray, Minute, January 13, 1922 to Allenby to Curzon, Tel. Nos. 17-20, January 12-13, 1922, FO/371/7730. This was supported by Duff Cooper, who noted in his diary, January 13: 'The situation looks really hopeful and a possible solution seems in sight.' Duff Cooper, op. cit., p.106.
 3. R.C. L[indsay], Minute, January 13, 1922 to ibid.
 4. E.A. C[rowe], Minute, January 13, 1922 to ibid.
 5. Crowe to Allenby, January 13, 1922, Tel. No. 12, FO/371/7730.

the Cabinet to discuss the matter before any sanction is given to these new proposals.'¹ Privately he continued to take every opportunity to express his opposition and contempt for Allenby as an administrator as well as a soldier.²

Throughout this period Allenby kept London informed about developments in Egypt. On January 15, based on information obtained by Selby and Clayton, he cabled encouraging news about developing unrest in the ranks of the Wafd and the promise this held for a settlement.³ Nearly a week passed, however, and still no action was taken on Allenby's request for authority to approach the Sultan along the lines indicated in his cables of January 12.

Allenby's Resignation and Recall

The Cabinet finally met on January 18 to discuss Allenby's proposals. Curzon presented his views in a memorandum which, in the first instance, was a characteristic attempt to absolve him of responsibility for recent developments. He sharply reminded the Cabinet that 'my advice as to the form of treaty to be offered to Adly Pasha and the reply to be sent to the Sultan was not taken in November last,' and he then noted that 'the Cabinet preferred to take a course which has been attended with the very consequences which I then unavailingly predicted.'⁴ After examination of the events in Egypt and the implications, as he understood them, of Allenby's proposals, Curzon stated that in view of all the factors, especially the opinions of his professional staff and his belief that the recent Irish settlement had encouraged the Egyptians, Allenby's advice should be accepted.

In Curzon's view this was a decision that required no decisive action making it especially attractive to him: '...the responsibility for the carrying out of the suggested policy is one which we are not invited to assume ourselves to-day or

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1. Churchill to Lloyd George, January 13, 1922, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/10/2/3.
 2. A good example was a conversation with Colonel Meinertzhagen and T.E. Lawrence, which Meinertzhagen recorded in his diary on December 24, 1921. Churchill was reported to have said that Allenby was 'a "dud" General....and that Allenby proved himself a weak and vacillating administrator in Egypt, devoid of policy or sense.' CRPO, Meinertzhagen Diaries, Vol. 22, p.110.
 3. Allenby to Curzon, January 15, 1922, private and personal, FO/371/7730. This hope proved to be ephemeral.
 4. C[urzon] of K[eddleston], The Egyptian Question, January 16, 1922, C.P. 3616, CAB/24/132.

tomorrow.'¹ Curzon believed that the British government would only be required to recommend Egypt's independence to Parliament: an Egyptian ministry would be formed immediately, while Parliament would not meet for nearly a month.

Curzon maintained his support for Allenby during the Cabinet meeting and warned that 'Here appeared to be a last chance of establishing an Egyptian Ministry.'² The Cabinet, however, was not easily swayed and the majority refused to concede independence, viewed as the last bargaining counter for a treaty. It was decided to adopt a time-honoured method of avoiding a decision by awaiting further information - a device that in part underlay the original Milner Mission. In spite of Curzon's warnings about 'the serious risks that would be incurred by delay,' and an implicit threat to resign since the Cabinet 'would be taking a false step which he would be unable to defend in Parliament,' no decision was taken. Instead the Cabinet would await the return of Austen Chamberlain, the Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House, as well as other absent ministers, and request that Allenby send Clayton and another responsible official to London 'to give their view to the Cabinet.'³

The Foreign Office officials were dismayed but informed Allenby of the Cabinet decision and asked him to send Amos and Clayton to London.⁴ This would result in a delay of several weeks and effectively end Allenby's hopes for a rapid and favourable solution of the Egyptian question. Curzon explained, in a personal cable to Allenby, that he had 'had utmost difficulty at Cabinet this morning in urging your views, which I even backed with threat of personal resignation.'⁵ The Cabinet's reservations, according to Curzon, centred on the absence of guarantees that the proposed Egyptian government would accept Allenby's four reservations or his

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1. Ibid.
 2. Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 2(22), January 18, 1922, CAB/23/29. He did moderate his support by calling for stronger Egyptian assurances on the reserved points.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Curzon to Allenby, January 18, 1922, Tel. No. 21, FO/371/7730. Duff Cooper noted in his diary, January 18, that the Cabinet 'failed miserably to come to any conclusion.' Lindsay thought 'the whole thing will remain in cold storage for the time being,' while 'Murray thinks it [delay] will be disastrous.' Duff Cooper, loc.cit.
 5. Curzon to Allenby, January 18, 1922, Strictly Personal and Confidential, Curzon Papers, FO/800/153. This is somewhat of an overstatement if the Cabinet records are taken at face value. The threat of resignation at most appears to be implied. See, Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 2(22), January 18, 1922, CAB/23/29.

interpretation of them. There was no way of knowing this until the protectorate had already been abolished. Curzon concluded with the promise that he would do his best to obtain favourable consideration of Allenby's proposals, adding the qualification that, 'you are aware, however, of the forces with which I have to contend.'¹

Allenby, unconvinced by the Cabinet decision, immediately replied that all the issues had been thoroughly considered by him and his advisers and that the proposals were his final advice. There was no point, therefore, in the Cabinet hearing Amos and Clayton, but he did suggest that Selby, already on his way to London, be consulted upon arrival. If the proposals were accepted, Allenby noted in his latest rejoinder, this would provide the basis for a lasting settlement, but their rejection would mean 'nothing but a rule of repression driving us to annexation of the country.'²

Allenby again attempted at great length to explain his views, frequently returning to the impossibility of ruling without the cooperation of moderate Egyptians and the extent to which speed was essential if the goodwill of that group was to be retained. He further assured Curzon, in a personal telegram on January 20, that conversations with Tharwat and Sidqi Pasha, a leading moderate politician, showed that they accepted his views on the reserved points.³ In fact, Sidqi and Tharwat had signed a procès verbal, binding on the individual but not on an Egyptian government, which summarised the results of their conversations with Scott, Amos and R.A. Furness, the Acting Oriental Secretary at the Residency.⁴ It was agreed, among other things, that Allenby's consent would be required for foreign loans, the engagement of senior officials in the Egyptian civil service, and officers in the

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1. Curzon to Allenby, January 18, 1922, strictly personal and confidential, Curzon Papers, FO/800/153.
 2. Allenby to Curzon, January 20, 1922, Tel. No. 27, FO/371/7731.
 3. Allenby to Curzon, January 20, 1922, personal, C.P.3643, CAB/24/132.
 4. PROCÈS VERBAL d'une conversation entre S.E. Abdel Khalik Pacha Saroit, S.E. Ismail Pacha Sidky, Mr. Ernest Scott, Mr. M.S. Amos & Mr. Furness a la Residence, le 20 janvier, 1922, FO/141/515. The main lines of the procès verbal seem to indicate that this agreement was based largely on a memorandum by Amos which also parallels Allenby's proposals to the British government. Amos, Draft Convention for the Termination of the Protectorate, in Dowson to Scott, January 15, 1922, Clayton Papers, SAD/470/14.

army and police. Allenby again sought to allay the Cabinet's fears and noted that the sanction of the protectorate was in itself meaningless. The only real sanction was Britain's military presence which would remain in any event. Meanwhile he warned: 'the sands are running out.'¹

To further impress London with the seriousness of his intent, Allenby sent Curzon a brief and blunt message on the same day, January 20: 'Situation admits of no delay, and if my advice is not accepted I shall resign.'² Relations with the Cabinet were now at a critical juncture. Curzon had at least implicitly threatened resignation and now Allenby raised the same possibility. The extent to which these threats were real and would be accepted as such by the Cabinet was the crucial issue. Duff Cooper posed the questions this way: '...will Curzon, if Allenby's resignation is accepted, resign too? He clearly should. Or on the other hand, will Winston and the Cabinet give way?'³

The Cabinet met again on January 23 to consider further the situation. Curzon reviewed the events of the preceding few days and informed the Cabinet of Allenby's threat to resign if his advice was rejected. In the face of strong opposition, the Foreign Secretary retreated from his earlier support of Allenby. He now proposed an ingenious compromise between the positions of London and Cairo, namely, a treaty to be ratified by the British and Egyptian parliaments. The agreement of the British Parliament, however, would be contingent upon the satisfactory settlement of all points outstanding between the two countries.

Curzon no longer alluded to resignation and by now had retreated from support, in principle, of unilateral independence. In effect, he proposed in this way to return to the negotiations which had collapsed in November. The Foreign Secretary was more concerned with his political flank than with the situation in Egypt. He admitted that 'he was not very sanguine as to whether these proposals would be accepted; but from a parliamentary point of view they would not be seriously open

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1. Allenby to Curzon, January 20, 1922, Personal, C.P.3643, CAB/24/132.
 2. Ostensibly this was intended to strengthen Curzon's hand in his dealings with the Cabinet. Allenby to Curzon, January 20, 1922, Most Urgent, FO/371/153.
 3. Diary entry for January 21, 1922, Duff Cooper, loc.cit.

to attack.'¹ This lack of political courage embittered relations between Curzon and Allenby and on another occasion led Austen Chamberlain to note derisively that 'he [Curzon] is a funkier and a bad man to go tiger-shooting with.'²

The Cabinet remained firm in its belief that the juridical position of Egypt should not be changed unilaterally. Lloyd George, Chamberlain, Sir Robert Horne, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Curzon, Churchill and H.A.L. Fisher were delegated to consider a draft reply to Allenby's proposals and his threatened resignation. A telegram was approved and sent on January 24.³ It expressed the majority view and adopted as its basis Curzon's compromise proposed to the Cabinet the previous day. Despite Cabinet opposition to Allenby's policy, he was asked to remain at his post. Instead of accepting his advice, the Cabinet proposed to support a parliamentary resolution to abolish the protectorate if agreement was reached on all reserved points. As one close observer commented at the time: 'This is quite useless. It amounts to saying that if a treaty is ever arrived at we promise to carry out one side of it.'⁴ Curzon confided to Allenby that the Cabinet could not or would not go any further. He no longer spoke of his own resignation but now argued that,

The Govt have sought to pay full consideration to anxieties of your position and they now rely upon you to exert your utmost abilities to procure assent to their policy. I have argued your case with all my energy and power - but Cabinet will go no further.⁵

Allenby was concerned that the delay had already caused irreparable damage. In reply to the compromise offered in the government's cable of January 24, he again pressed acceptance of either his policy or his resignation. Since the British government seemed to him to be bent on destroying any chance for a friendly Egypt, he now asked that his resignation be formally tendered to the King because 'my opinions are well-known here and if the advice I have offered is rejected I cannot

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1. Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet3(22), January 23, 1922, CAB/23/29.
 2. Chamberlain to Lloyd George, December 7, 1922, BUL, Chamberlain Papers, AC/18/1/35. Wavell states that at one point Curzon informed Allenby that he would support him 'up to the point of resignation,' which was later explained as meaning 'up to but not including resignation.' Wavell, op.cit., p.72.
 3. Curzon to Allenby, January 24, 1922, Tel. No. 26, C.P.3647, CAB/24/132.
 4. Diary entry for January 24, 1922, Duff Cooper, op.cit., p.108.
 5. Curzon to Allenby, January 24, 1922, Private and Personal, FO/371/7730. This telegram was written in Curzon's hand.

honourably remain.'¹

These exchanges drew the lines sharply between Allenby and the Cabinet: the one pressed for a unilateral approach and the other for a bilateral one. The Cabinet was willing to negotiate but refused to concede anything without prior agreement even at the risk that Allenby might resign. Future policy would, apparently, be determined by which of the two would cause greater political embarrassment - concession of Egypt's independence or Allenby's resignation.

The struggle between Allenby and the Cabinet was not a simple one and was further complicated by the strong support - some might say, instigation - of his advisers in Cairo. The earlier threat to resign in their November 17 memorandum on Egypt's future was now clearly and forcefully repeated.² In addition, Selby brought to London a telegram he had received at Marseilles from Allenby stating that, if Allenby's policy was rejected, all the major British advisers in Egypt would resign. Selby informed Duff Cooper of this immediately upon his arrival in London on January 22.³ Thus when the Cabinet met again on January 26 it was no longer a simple choice between Allenby's resignation or acceptance of his Egyptian policy. If the Cabinet persisted to the point of Allenby's resignation, they would have 'to carry out their policy with the whole of our instruments in Egypt gone.'⁴

The Cabinet decided not to give in to the pressure of the advisers since this could not be defended in Parliament. Because of the administrative dislocation that

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1. Allenby to Curzon, January 25, 1922, Tel. No. 31, FO/371/7730. There were indications that some in the Cabinet, especially Churchill and his supporters, would not regret Allenby's resignation. T.E. Lawrence, commenting on Lord Lloyd's Egypt Since Cromer, wrote that 'Winston tried to get my consent to take Allenby's place and to accept his resignation at this moment.' T.E. Lawrence to G[eorge]. L[loyd], September 30, 1934. David Garnett (ed.), The Letters of T.E. Lawrence (London, 1938), pp.819-20. Vansittart at the Foreign Office denied that there was any substance in Lawrence's claim: 'The appointment lay with Curzon. If Winston had ever foolishly proposed Lawrence I should have heard, for Curzon would have laughed him out of court, and the laughter would not have been kind.' Vansittart, op.cit., p.
 2. Amos now cabled Murray that 'We feel you should have advance information of intended action of advisers.' This referred to their resignation. Allenby to Curzon, January 26, 1922, Tel. No. —, FO/371/7730.
 3. Ibid., and Duff Cooper, diary entry for January 22, 1922: 'He [Selby] showed me a telegram he had got from Allenby at Marseilles saying all the advisers would resign too.' Duff Cooper, op.cit., p.106. Apparently Duff Cooper heard too late to inform Curzon before the Cabinet met, or Curzon knew and did not inform the Cabinet until the 26th of January.
 4. Curzon's statement to the Cabinet. Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 4(22), January 26, 1922. CAB/23/29.

would attend their resignations, it was decided to bring pressure to bear upon the advisers, nominally members of the Egyptian civil service, to remain at their posts. This call was to be made in the name of and for the sake of the welfare of the British Empire.¹

The situation regarding Allenby's resignation was different. Because Allenby could no longer effectively represent British policy, he was to be recalled to report upon the situation, at which time his resignation could be accepted. The discussion that continued in the Cabinet on the following day, January 27, moved in the same direction, with anger clearly expressed 'at the manner in which they [the Cabinet] had been kept in the dark as to his proceedings in the past six weeks, with the result that they were suddenly confronted with what amounted to an ultimatum.'² There was great bitterness at the presumption of Allenby and his advisers, and the decision to recall him and to issue a communiqué announcing this step was confirmed at this meeting. Allenby's resignation would not be accepted until he returned home.

The telegram of recall was sent on January 28.³ Allenby was taken to task on the grounds that although the original government policy had been formulated in consultation with him, after a long and uninformed lapse he had presented the Cabinet with an ultimatum that would mean the total surrender of the existing position. In addition he had rigidly refused to consider the government's liberal proposals but simply repeated his ultimatum. Surprise was expressed at the sudden and extreme change in Egypt's political climate, a change which precluded any settlement save through the concession of independence. Since Allenby refused to send Clayton and Amos to London, he now was asked to return to England to report to the Cabinet before they could accept his resignation. There is little doubt that this telegram was meant to chastise and humiliate Allenby for his stubborn refusal to comply with the Cabinet's wishes.⁴ Furthermore, with one eye cast on the inevitable papers to be laid before Parliament explaining recent events in Egypt, it was a rather clever

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1. Ibid., and Murray to Amos [drafted by Curzon], in Curzon to Allenby, January 28, 1922, Tel. No. 34, FO/371/7730.
 2. Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 5(22), January 27, 1922, CAB/23/29.
 3. Curzon to Allenby, January 28, 1922, Tel. No. 32, C.P.3647, CAB/24/132.
 4. Duff Cooper's entry in his diary, January 28: 'We have sent a very insulting telegram to Allenby, refusing to accept his resignation and telling him to come home. He has been ill-treated.' Duff Cooper, loc.cit.

attempt to contrast the Cabinet's reasonable^{ness} with Allenby's intransigence.

Allenby's Return and the Struggle in London

Allenby now prepared for his return to England convinced that he would be replaced. He told Lord Northcliffe, his guest at the Residency, 'that he was probably not coming back to Egypt.'¹ A few days before Allenby left Egypt he spoke informally at a dinner in Northcliffe's honour. He explained his sentiments that had animated him since his return to Egypt and which would guide him in his future association with that country. On that occasion he said,

...it was absurd to think that after 40 years we should scuttle out of the country at the bidding of the extremists. That it was foolish to try and make a treaty - the value of treaties had been shown in the case of Persia. Gr. Britain was too big to condescend to treaties with the Egyptians. His policy was concessions without bargains. The B[ritish]. G[overnment]. had made certain promises (he had never made any) which it had got to fulfill. But they should be carried out without any quid pro quo. If you find a man down at your feet, you didn't say 'now let us make a bargain,' you allowed him to get up, with a threat that if he didn't behave himself, you would down him again.²

In Britain Allenby's recall was announced to the press on January 29. According to the Foreign Office communiqué, Allenby was summoned home ostensibly 'to give full information and advice' on the situation in Egypt and to report on the communications that had passed between him and the Egyptian leaders.³ The language and content of the communiqué was, however, equivocal and confusing. On the one hand it sought to refute the impression that the government 'has abandoned or is about to abandon her liberal attitude towards Egyptian aspirations,' while on the other it reaffirmed Britain's refusal to grant independence to Egypt without prior agreement on all vital issues.⁴

The public response to this document reflected its confusing nature. The Daily Chronicle noted that the communiqué 'does not represent any change in...policy,'

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1. Alfred Viscount Northcliffe [A. Harmsworth], My Journey Round the World: 16 July 1921-26 February 1922 (London, 1923), p.264.
 2. [Sir B. Hornsby], Note of Conversation with Lord A., 2/2/22, STAC, Hornsby Papers, Box I/File II.
 3. Times, January 30, 1922.
 4. Ibid.

while the Manchester Guardian believed that 'the whole Egyptian policy is to be reconsidered.'¹ The Daily Express saw it as confirmation of 'Lord Curzon's acceptance of the Churchill objections,' and the Daily Telegraph felt that this indicated 'that the way of negotiation is still open.'² The Westminster Gazette most aptly summarized public mystification over the government's course: 'With such a document before us we can only grope after the truth...'³

Amidst this welter of speculation, Allenby returned to London together with Amos and Clayton on Friday, February 10. Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, recorded his friend's reception: 'I met Allenby at Victoria Station, 10.15 a.m. Philip Chetwode also there. No high Foreign Office official and no car to meet the Bull. It was a scandal.'⁴ Allenby, however, was not put off by the cold reception and bluntly told his friends, including Selby, that 'I have not come home to argue...'⁵ He insisted on going directly to the Foreign Office to leave for printing and circulation a long despatch composed in Egypt and intended as a refutation of the charges levelled against him when he was recalled.

The outcome of the struggle between Allenby and London could not be predicted with any great measure of certainty because of the many factors affecting a government decision.

To begin with, the first two sections of the Geddes Report of the Economy Committee had been released to the press on the very day Allenby returned home. The Committee recommended Service economies of £46.5 million and suggested that the military forces in Egypt and in the Middle East be reduced below current levels.⁶ But only three weeks earlier the General Staff had warned the Cabinet that if, as feared, nationalists succeeded in arousing the populace in Egypt because Britain had rejected the Milner Report, reinforcements of at least two divisions and one cavalry brigade would be needed to maintain the British position and to protect

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1. Daily Chronicle, January 30, 1922; Manchester Guardian, January 30, 1922.
 2. Daily Express, January 30, 1922; Daily Telegraph, January 30, 1922.
 3. Westminster Gazette, January 31, 1922.
 4. Major-General Sir C.E. Callwell, Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, Bart., G.C.B., D.S.O.: His Life and Diaries (London, 1927), II, 325.
 5. Diary entry for February 10, 1922, Extracts from the Wilson Diaries, KAP.
 6. Cmd. 1581, 1582 in Times, February 11, 1922.

European lives.¹ The government was torn between the ^{perceived} need for economies and the potential need for more troops if Allenby's advice was again rejected.

Public and parliamentary reaction to possible developments in Egypt was also a major consideration. There was the question posed by Sir Henry Wilson in a conversation with Worthington-Evans: 'whether the Cabinet were prepared for the odium of governing Egypt by force, if no Egyptian Cabinet can be formed except on the platform of complete independence and full sovereign rights.'² There is no record of any satisfactory reply having been given.

In addition, there was growing uncertainty about the government's future. January and February 1922 was a period of serious unrest in the Unionist Party, the major partner in the coalition, over Lloyd George's election plans. It was also at this point, in February, that Andrew Bonar Law returned to active political life. This provided the Unionists with a possible alternative to Lloyd George's leadership and further weakened the coalition's political base.

Another important factor was that the Egyptian question could not be quietly resolved in the government's favour. Allenby enjoyed strong support from various sections of the press such as the Times, the Observer, the Guardian and the Northcliffe papers.³ His resignation and the reason for its acceptance was not an issue that could be glossed over easily since every major paper had reported that the High Commissioner had returned home prepared to resign if his advice was rejected.⁴ Even a paper like the Daily Express which viciously attacked Allenby for returning from the East 'like Pompey with a demand that all his views should be

1. The paper was prepared by the Imperial General Staff and submitted by Wilson, CIGS, to the Secretary of State for War, Worthington-Evans, on January 10, 1922, and then to the Cabinet. L. W[orthington]-E[vans]., Army Estimates, January 20, 1922, C.P.3619, CAB/24/132.
2. Wilson's diary entry for January 27, 1922 in Callwell, op.cit., II, 322.
3. Examples of favourable press comment are in Times, February 8, 1922; Observer, February 12, 1922; Daily Mail, February 4, 1922. Northcliffe, recently Allenby's guest at the Residency, made a very strong statement in his support on February 5 and this was widely reported in the British press. Times, February 8, 1922.
4. Some of the reports of Allenby's threats to resign are: Observer, February 12, 1922; Daily Chronicle, February 16, 1922; Daily Herald, February 13, 1922; Manchester Guardian, February 14, 1922; Daily Express, February 15, 1922; Daily News, February 10, 1922; Times, February 10, 1922.

approved, or with designs on the Imperial diadem,¹ tended to arouse passions rather than quieten them.

Finally, even if the government was willing to risk accepting Allenby's resignation, it would have to face him in the House of Lords when it defended its policy in Parliament. Bland explanations or glib attempts to strengthen the government case would not be accepted passively. Thus, given Allenby's support among his advisers, the publicity surrounding his recall, the general political situation and his personal position, the High Commissioner, as in March-April 1919, was in a powerful position in his conflict with London.

The first episode in the struggle in London began when Selby returned home. Pressure was brought to bear on him when Curzon 'tried to induce [Selby] ...to agree, in a three hours' interview, to a telegram to Allenby which would have been a complete reversal of the policy Allenby was advocating.'² The campaign began in earnest when Allenby arrived in London with his twenty-nine paged despatch which sought to answer the Foreign Office telegrams of January 24 and 28.³

The despatch was meticulously composed, carefully marshalling documentary evidence in support of Allenby's position - emphasising the more easily proven elements of his case while ingeniously explaining the weaker ones. Selby later described it as 'a fine piece of work and [it] really clinched the whole argument.'⁴

The despatch's main arguments were levelled against the Cabinet's two major

1. Daily Express, February 9, 1922. Chirol wrote at the time about the campaign against Allenby 'in newspapers reputed to be in close touch with certain members of the Cabinet.' Here he alluded to Churchill and the Express. V. Chirol, 'Ending the Egyptian Deadlock,' Fort. Rev., III, (April, 1922), p.548. Wilson commented on this in his diary on January 30, 1922: 'the Govt. press are already commencing the same miserable cowardly campaign...' Extracts from the Wilson Diaries, KAP.
2. Selby to Harold Nicholson, Vienna, May 13, 1934, KAP. Selby wrote this letter to correct the erroneous description of events and of Curzon's role in them that appeared in Nicholson's Curzon, pp.180-2.
3. Allenby to Curzon, February 2, 1922, Despatch No. 81, FO/371/7731. [Hereafter: Feb. 2 Despatch...].
4. Selby to Nicholson, Vienna, May 13, 1934, KAP. Everyone seemed bent on disowning the despatch. Lloyd George at one point told Amos that 'He believed he was a very gifted writer,' to which Amos replied that 'he was not the author of any of the despatches.' Memorandum of a Conversation at 10 Downing Street, London, S.W.1 on Wednesday, February 15th, 1922 at 11.00 a.m., S.40, CAB/23/35. This writer has been unable to uncover the real author. It may have been, on the basis of style, Scott or A. Clerk Kerr. The identity of the writer may have been kept secret because of possible damage to his career in the Foreign Office.

charges against Allenby: first, that Allenby had suddenly presented the Cabinet with an ultimatum to change a policy that had been formulated after consultation with him; and, second, that despite the Cabinet's willingness to make great concessions, Allenby had 'refused to support their liberal proposals in Egypt.'¹

Allenby attempted to counter the first charge by restating the positions he had consistently taken throughout the period. The despatch emphasised Allenby's comments made as early as April 1921 in written communications on the need for an alternative policy, namely, the unilateral imposition of independence. It also noted his warnings about the impossibility of success if the substance of British concessions was less than that envisaged by Milner. Allenby's rather weak personal appearance in London and his participation in Cabinet discussions in Autumn 1921 were explained by the argument that consultation on policy was by no means the same as responsibility for the policy finally adopted.

Furthermore, when he did urge the unilateral imposition of independence at a Cabinet sub-committee on October 24, his plea fell on deaf ears. Finally, with respect to his reluctance to press his policy strongly on the Cabinet in early November 1921, Allenby noted that

I was there and then invited to formulate a policy, which I necessarily refused to do, seeing that His Majesty's Government had been for some months in possession of my views and that I could not dictate a policy in five minutes.²

The despatch then recounted Allenby's actions and communications after his return to Egypt on November 12. The aim, largely successful, was to demonstrate that there was a consistent progression in Allenby's approach as well as in events in Egypt rather than a precipitate change in either or both. The change that did occur resulted from the December 3 Note to the Sultan which Allenby did not compose and of whose contents he was ignorant.³ Again, at the beginning of December, Allenby urged independence as the means to end the impasse. He now repeated his views on the 'uselessness' of the Foreign Office proposals for a platform for a prospective

1. Feb. 2 Despatch..., p.4, FO/371/7731.

2. Ibid.

3. Allenby's comments here are somewhat misleading since his reaction to the December 3 Note now had the benefit of hindsight. But at the time Allenby wrote his mother, December 5, that the Sultan 'accepted them [the papers] sensibly and pleasantly...I don't...anticipate any bad trouble.' Again on December 8, 'Egypt has taken the declaration by the British Government fairly quietly.' Allenby to Mother, December 5 and 8, 1921, KAP.

Egyptian ministry. Allenby refused to admit that he kept London in the dark about developments, despite Crowe's request for information in December. Instead he maintained that the direction of events leading to Zaghlul's arrest was clear. He simply waited for it to crystallise before reporting the details to London.

One of the despatch's major points was that Allenby's advocacy of the immediate declaration of independence was not the result of a violent change in Egypt's political climate. On the contrary, because Allenby had successfully suppressed the activities of Zaghlul and his supporters, it was claimed, 'a momentarily stable situation' arose requiring a quick decision for its successful exploitation. Thus Allenby tried to refute the accusation that he had presented the government with a sudden ultimatum as a result of a dramatic turn for the worse in Egyptian opinion.

Finally, in answer to the claim that he 'refused to recommend...[the government's] liberal proposals to the Sultan and to the Egyptian Authorities,'¹ Allenby first examined the British proposals in order to gainsay their liberality. Then he reminded the reader that, while he believed these proposals doomed to failure and could not himself accept responsibility for them, he nevertheless had expressed willingness to present them to the Egyptians. It was at this point that Allenby was recalled. Allenby concludes this careful analysis of the background to his resignation with the observation that his mission was to maintain the protectorate over Egypt:

I have done so; but I do not think it has the elements of durability and I have now advised its being brought to an end, as it was established, by a unilateral declaration.²

Allenby's Victory: Egyptian Independence

Allenby's first personal encounter was his dramatic and heated meeting with Curzon on February 10, shortly after he had brought his despatch to the Foreign Office.³ Allenby and Curzon argued for ninety minutes after the latter had read, to his mortification, part of Allenby's blunt despatch. This was not the kind of

1. Feb. 2 Despatch..., p.21, FO/371/7731.

2. Ibid.

3. This meeting is reconstructed from four sources: Selby's notes, KAP; Extracts from Wilson Diaries, KAP; Curzon to Lloyd George, February 10, 1922, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/13/3/6; and, an account given by an anonymous friend of Allenby, possibly Selby, to Wavell, op.cit., pp.75-6.

document Cabinet ministers were accustomed to reading and Curzon questioned the propriety of its circulation. At first he derisively asked who had really composed the document and then, as Curzon later reported to Lloyd George, 'I urged him not to ask me to circulate this Despatch which I thought would not help him. But he insisted...'¹ Allenby was not interested in Curzon's or the Cabinet's sensibilities - he had not come to argue. Curzon soon learned that Allenby could not be moved:

I found the anticipated difficulty in dealing with him either by argument or by persuasion. He is unable to see any inconsistency in his own conduct or advice, regards himself as the Saviour of Egypt who has been cruelly and inexcusably turned down, declines, as 'a man of honour', to recede one iota from his position, and asks, as he has resigned, why we do not accept at once his resignation.²

Allenby refused any compromise Curzon suggested. Curzon then expressed anxiety to Lloyd George 'not from the loss of this particular agent (whose limitation we know) but from the feeling that his loss will involve us in a struggle in Egypt which we shall fight at every disadvantage, and we or others will not eventually win.'³ Curzon finally asked Allenby to see Lloyd George, the only man who might yet dissuade him from the course on which he had embarked. As Curzon plaintively wrote to the Prime Minister: 'You may succeed where I failed.'⁴ The next day Allenby told Sir Henry Wilson that 'Curzon was almost crying.'⁵

Allenby returned to the Foreign Office on Saturday, February 11, to ensure that the despatch had indeed been printed. Before he left for Felixstowe, he had a long talk with his friend Wilson, telling him that, 'if his terms were not agreed to he would resign.'⁶

Curzon now attempted to influence Allenby through his supporters. He met Clayton on Saturday evening and 'discussed at great length...the idea that the Sarwat Ministry if it accepts office should embody in their letter a declaration to the Sultan [of] assurances of the nature that we demand.'⁷ Clayton however refused to commit himself in Allenby's absence and, after discussing Curzon's proposals with

1. Curzon to Lloyd George, February 10, 1922, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/13/3/6.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Entry for February 11, 1922, Extracts from the Wilson Diaries, KAP.

6. Ibid.

7. Curzon to Lloyd George, February 13, 1922, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/13/3/7.

Amos, informed the Foreign Secretary on February 12, that,

I find it difficult...to suggest any formula which would serve your purpose and at the same time preserve the spirit of Lord Allenby's proposals, of which the essence is an unilateral declaration by His Majesty's Government, as opposed to a "bargain".¹

At the same time Churchill was trying to shore up the weakening opposition to Allenby's policy. Wilson wrote in his diary that 'Winston said that he would never agree and would fight to the end. He said the Cabinet was evenly divided.'²

Originally Allenby was to have met with Lloyd George on Monday, February 13, but again with apparent disregard for the urgency of the situation, a critical meeting was postponed. Although by now there was some doubt about the Cabinet's resolve, Allenby's was certainly never in question. He again spoke to Wilson at length on the evening of February 14. Allenby scheduled to see the Prime Minister on the next day, said that 'he was going to put very plainly before him that he must choose at once between his advice and his resignation.'³

Allenby and Lloyd George met at 11.00 a.m. on Wednesday, February 15. Also present during these conversations were Curzon, Sir Edward Grigg, Lloyd George's secretary, Sir Maurice Hankey, the Cabinet Secretary, Amos and Clayton.⁴ Lloyd George began the conference by attempting to clarify the differences between Allenby and the Cabinet so as to be sure that this was not a case of mere misunderstanding. Allenby quickly made it clear that the differences were indeed basic: 'The point at issue...was that Lord Curzon thought it was possible to make a bargain with an Egyptian Government and he was convinced that it was not.'⁵ Allenby's justification of his position was 'that Great Britain was strong enough to allow Egypt to have

1. Clayton to Curzon, February 12, 1922, Clayton Papers, SAD/470/14.
2. Entry for February 12, 1922, Extracts from the Wilson Diaries, KAP.
3. Entry for February 14, 1922 in ibid.
4. The sources used for reconstructing the morning and evening conferences are: 1) MEMORANDUM of a CONVERSATION AT 10 Downing St., London, S.W.1 on WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15th, 1922 at 11.00 a.m., S.40, CAB/23/35 [hereafter: Morning Conversation...]; 2) MEMORANDUM of a CONVERSATION AT 10 Downing St., London, S.W.1 on WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15th at 6.00 p.m., S.41, CAB/23/36 [hereafter: Evening Conversation...]; 3) Wavell, op.cit., pp.77-8; 4) Extracts from the Wilson Diaries, KAP. The first two sources were apparently 'laundered' for Cabinet consumption, while the last two reflect the views of Allenby's close friends and supporters.
5. Morning Conversation..., p.2.

independence. If this were done, Great Britain would still retain effective guarantees in its army, its navy and its position in Egypt.'¹

Curzon at this point began attacking Allenby's position and the fairness of his account of the events of the previous weeks. Lloyd George quickly cut short Curzon's complaints and turned to the government's position. This was that 'the British Government did not intend to give up Egypt; that is to say: their special interests in and control of the British Government over that country.'² Essentially the difference between them, according to Lloyd George, was that the government was willing to abolish the protectorate but only after terms had been agreed upon, while Allenby would not wait for agreement, confident that the Egyptian reaction to the abolition of the protectorate would be to concede to Britain her vital interests in Egypt. Amos here intervened to correct Lloyd George and stated that Allenby's policy was not based on vague hopes for good will but on the belief that the 'proposed letter to the Sultan provided a modus vivendi which would preserve British interests intact.'³

Eventually Lloyd George indicated the real problem, the different orientations underlying policy differences: Amos and Allenby 'had to deal with Egyptian opinion and he and his colleagues had to deal with Parliament.'⁴ If the Prime Minister would present Allenby's Egyptian policy to Parliament, it would be rejected. Despite Amos's assurances that the status quo in Egypt would be protected not by explicit references to it nor by the formal protectorate, but by the solid fact of the continued British occupation, Lloyd George remained unconvinced by the argument or its defensibility. Independence, he believed, would inevitably change the status quo to Britain's detriment: '...every fez in Cairo would have been thrown into the air and every Egyptian would have interpreted it as meaning that the British were to be cleared out of Egypt...'⁵ Instead, Lloyd George proposed that Allenby's representative meet with a government representative to compose a document that would clearly state exactly what was intended and how far Britain would go. The Egyptians would then have to accept this.

Allenby rejected this proposal out of hand. His draft letter to the Sultan was a carefully wrought instrument, formulated in concert with Tharwat and designed to maintain the delicate balance between the appearance of Egyptian independence, vital

1. Ibid., p.4.

2. Ibid., p.6.

3. Ibid., p.7.

4. Ibid., p.8

5. Ibid., p.10.

to the needs of Egyptian moderates, and the reality of British power, essential for the protection of British interests in Egypt. Allenby therefore told Lloyd George that since his commitment to the draft letter was well-known in Egypt, he would have to resign.

The Prime Minister, Curzon and Amos continued their argument over the effectiveness of the proces verbal signed by Tharwat and Sidqi. Throughout the discussion it was apparent that Cairo's need for a stable administration and London's desire for a politically palatable solution were incompatible. The meeting ended with Lloyd George's request that Amos commit to writing, for an evening meeting, the Residency position and the protection it would afford British interests. While Allenby did not object to this procedure, he repeated his desire to resign now that his advice had been rejected again. Allenby was convinced that an impasse existed and that the 6.00 p.m. meeting would do little to resolve it.¹

There was, however, a marked difference in the atmosphere of the evening conference. The conversations now dealt with actual points of policy rather than with its underlying rationale. Allenby's defence of British interests in Egypt were contained in paragraph thirteen of his draft letter to the Sultan. This outlined the four areas reserved for later negotiations. When the conversations resumed Allenby gave Lloyd George and Curzon a redraft of that paragraph, strengthening the wording and thereby explicitly maintaining the status quo on the reserved points. The new wording noted that 'Pending the conclusion of an agreement the present situation in regard to these questions will remain intact.'² This was intended to offset the criticisms voiced earlier in the day that both in fact and in appearance the status quo would be altered and Britain's position abandoned if Allenby's policy was adopted.

Despite Curzon's hesitation, Lloyd George felt that 'this paragraph provided the basis of an understanding.'³ Still, since he wanted to frame procedure carefully with a clear declaration by the High Commissioner of the terms under which Egypt would be ruled, he had asked Grigg to draw up a rough declaration. It would be on the understanding of such a statement that an Egyptian government would take office, even if they obviously could not be expected to sign their assent to it. Allenby

1. Wilson wrote in his diary, February 15, that Allenby came to see him after the morning conversation: 'He told me an impasse had been reached...' Extracts from the Wilson Diaries, KAP.

2. Evening Conversation..., p.2.

3. Ibid., p.3.

again rejected any effort to tamper with the wording of his draft letter to the Sultan or to change substantially the procedure he had proposed since it would arouse suspicion. If the Prime Minister persisted, Allenby 'would have to insist on the acceptance of his resignation which he had offered some weeks ago.'¹

At this point Lloyd George apparently realised that he could not win. He 'asked Lord Allenby, who said he had been patient for five weeks, to be patient for five minutes more. He [Lloyd George] was doing his utmost to meet Lord Allenby's views.'² Now all the Prime Minister wanted was some declaration of the means by which Egypt would be governed in the event a ministry could not be formed. Allenby believed that a ministry would take office if the revised draft letter was adopted. Lloyd George still wanted a simple draft, based on paragraphs ten to thirteen of Allenby's letter to the Sultan, to present to the Cabinet and to defend in Parliament: 'There would be a very fierce resistance to the policy Lord Allenby proposed. Certain sections would say that we were giving up Egypt, evacuating it, shewing the white feather, etc.'³ As a further concession, Lloyd George proposed using the first nine paragraphs of Allenby's draft letter as the basis of a new letter to the Sultan, while the last four paragraphs would serve as the declaration of Egypt's independence.

By thus separating the explanatory portion of Allenby's proposed document from the actual terms of the new relationship wherein Egypt would be independent subject to the four reserved points, Lloyd George could limit parliamentary debate to the more easily defensible short declaration. Since it was now merely a question of tactics, with Allenby's policy adopted virtually in toto, the meeting ended with the understanding that Allenby and his advisers would meet with Grigg and a Foreign Office representative to draft the instrument of proclamation of Egypt's independence so that it could be approved by the Cabinet on the evening of February 16. The struggle between Cairo and London ended in almost total victory for Allenby; Egypt would have its independence unilaterally declared by Britain, with the four reserved points left for later negotiation.⁴

The final stage in the dispute between London and Cairo consisted of the approval and implementation of the Allenby-Lloyd George understanding, on the one

1. Evening Conversation..., p.4.

2. Ibid., p.5. Wilson noted in his diary, February 15, that 'at 7.15...he [Allenby] came to tell me that LG was in full retreat.' Extracts from Wilson Diaries, KAP.

3. Ibid., p.6.

4. See: Supra, p. 104.

hand, and the effort to cover up the extent of the Cabinet's retreat on the other.

This began at the Cabinet meeting on February 16. Lloyd George reviewed the history of the dispute and tried to show that it was in fact Allenby who had been forced to retreat. The Prime Minister, in his presentation, ignored the original and major difference between the two sides, namely, whether to grant independence before or after agreement. Instead he emphasised the relatively minor detail of Allenby's strengthening the language of paragraph thirteen since the original, it was claimed, did not secure the status quo. By stressing Allenby's 'retreat' on this point, Lloyd George could disregard his own rout and commend the draft declaration to the Cabinet.¹ After some debate and apparent hesitation, the Cabinet approved the policy and procedures agreed upon the previous evening. Final details were confirmed at a meeting on February 20 at which Lloyd George, Curzon, Austen Chamberlain, Allenby, Hankey and Grigg were present.²

The next step in the government's defence of its new policy was Lloyd George's statement to the Commons on February 28. Here he outlined the implications of the declaration of Egypt's independence and tried to give the impression that the initiative had been and still was in London's hands. Since no agreement with Egypt was possible the British government had decided to take unilateral action, a step, he assured the Commons, which enjoyed 'the whole-hearted support of Lord Allenby and of the British officials of all ranks in the service of the Egyptian Government,'³ and he therefore called for its endorsement. As intended, Lloyd George was able to confine the debate to the short declaration and he did not discuss the letter to the Sultan in his statement.

The change in policy was well received in the British press. Almost all the major papers approved of Egyptian independence and, in particular, of Allenby's role in the reversal of earlier policy. Despite government efforts to foster a contrary

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1. Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 10(22), February 16, 1922, CAB/23/29, pp.2-4. Wavell claims that Curzon tried to defeat the proposal in Cabinet and that after its approval 'he spoke petulantly of "the stupidity of these soldiers."' Wavell, op. cit., p.78. There is no evidence to support this, however, in Cabinet Minutes.
 2. For the final version of the letter to the Sultan and the declaration, see: M.P.A. Hankey, Egypt, February 25, 1922, C.P. 3782, CAB/24/133. For the record of the meeting that approved the procedures and language, see: MEMORANDUM of a MEETING at 10 Downing Street, London, S.W.1, on Monday, February 20th, 1922, at 12.0 noon in Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 14(22), March 2, 1922, CAB/23/29.
 3. Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates, 5th Series, CLI, 271.

impression, the Manchester Guardian could note with satisfaction that 'It is an instance, not unique but rare, of the soldier on the spot having more vision and perspective than the statesmen at home,' a statement widely echoed by others.¹

The final defence of government policy and the denial of the reality of its retreat came in the debate on Egypt in the Commons on March 14. Austen Chamberlain, as Leader of the House, opened the debate on the papers on Egypt that had been laid before the House.² In an instance of almost incredible misrepresentation - one which would later affect relations between Allenby and Chamberlain when the latter became Foreign Secretary in 1924 - Chamberlain informed the House that Allenby's original policy would have surrendered Britain's entire position and all her interests in Egypt. However, he continued, after Allenby's return,

I am glad to say that the moment we came together...all differences were removed. He [Allenby] agreed that it was essential that those British interests and obligations should be safeguarded as a part of the abolition of the Protectorate, and that they should not be left to the mercy of an agreement to be subsequently made.³

In any event, the new policy towards Egypt, its enunciation by Chamberlain and its reception in Parliament seemed cause for self-congratulations. Chamberlain wrote Lloyd George the next day that,

Egypt went very well yesterday afternoon. There was no challenge to our policy on the ground that our concessions went too far. The 'Times' gives only an abbreviated account of my speech, but it will, I think, be sufficient to show you that I made clear the nature of the difference between Allenby and ourselves. The point was very well received by our friends, including, perhaps especially, our 'candid friends'.⁴

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1. Manchester Guardian, March 1, 1922. For some other favourable press comments, see: Daily Chronicle, March 1, 1922; Daily News, March 1, 1922; Daily Telegraph, March 2, 1922; Westminster Gazette, March 1, 1922; Times, February 18, 1922.
 2. Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, 'Egypt No.1', (1922), Vol. XXII [C.-1592]. All the government papers were drafted with an eye to blurring the extent of its retreat. This was also true of the telegrams sent to the Dominions. See: Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governors-General of the Dominions, February 27, 1922, FO/371/7732.
 3. Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates, 5th Series, CLI, 2063. Wavell comments that Chamberlain may not have been aware of the extent of Lloyd George's retreat since he was not present at the conversations but only at the Cabinet meeting of February 16. Wavell, loc.cit.
 4. Austen Chamberlain to Lloyd George, March 15, 1922, BLL, Lloyd George Papers, F/7/5/8.

Congratulations may have been in order. Allenby indeed had obtained a policy of unilateral independence for Egypt and the government had been able to concede the point without appearing to have beaten too unseemly a retreat. Still, in Britain's relations with Egypt and in London's ties with its representatives in Cairo, there was an inescapable feeling, as a writer later said of India, that:

Power had gone, and with it died the will that animates all faiths.¹

1. A.J. Thornton, Doctrines of Imperialism, p.26.

CHAPTER SIX: THE NEW APPROACH - DISENGAGEMENT AND RESTRICTION

Allenby returned to Cairo on February 28, 1922, the same day that Lloyd George proposed Egypt's independence to the British parliament. A new approach, whether in appearance or in fact, had been adopted. But, although Allenby had won a personal victory, the independence, such as it was, obtained for Egypt in London would soon become meaningless if its consequences were not dealt with in Cairo. Indeed, the success or failure of this initiative would be determined in the short run by the ability of the British authorities to deal with those consequences within the parameters of the February declaration.

Disengagement in London and Cairo

After February 1922, the various pressures on the British government such as the unsettled domestic situation, foreign negotiations, and, especially at the end of the year, the Chanak crisis in Asia Minor, meant that internal Egyptian affairs continued to have a low priority in London. Throughout 1922, during the Lloyd George ministry as well as the ministry of his Conservative successor, Bonar Law, there was relative^{lack of} interest in Egypt at the Cabinet level. In this period London did not initiate policy as much as it responded to events in Cairo and to Residency proposals.

Once Egypt's status had been defined in the early months of 1922, disinterest was tantamount to disengagement. This attitude also seems to have characterised Bonar Law's general approach to policy after he took office in November 1922. Reacting to the ferment of the Lloyd George years and especially to the war scare in Anatolia only a few months earlier, Bonar Law made domestic and foreign stability his party's keynote during the November 1922 general election. He set the theme of his government in the Conservative Party Manifesto, when he concluded that 'the nation's first need...is, in every walk of life, to get on with its own work, with the minimum of interference at home and disturbance abroad.'¹

1. Blake, op.cit., p.466.

In this atmosphere, Curzon and the Foreign Office appear to have enjoyed a relatively free hand in Egyptian affairs. This was especially true under Bonar Law. According to James Davidson, Bonar Law's Parliamentary Private Secretary, in 1922-23, the Prime Minister thought 'Curzon a mountebank', but had 'to appoint him his deputy because he had more experience than anyone else. He was a great expert on foreign affairs, even if he was often very indecisive.'¹

Nevertheless there was little Foreign Office direction over Egypt during the period following independence. Beyond the general crisis atmosphere, pressure on the coalition government in the last months of its life, and then the uncertain tenure of the ailing Bonar Law,² Curzon was ill. From the end of May until the middle of July 1922, the Foreign Secretary was confined to his bed with a chronically weak back and leg as well as with an attack of phlebitis. Curzon was temporarily replaced at the Foreign Office by Balfour. Thomas Jones described in his diary on June 13, 1922 what ensued:

Grigg does the P.M.'s Foreign Office work and the P.M.'s activities in this direction are widely resented in and out of the F.O. Curzon is away ill. Eyre Crowe's instructions from his chief are to carry down the Curzon policy. Balfour goes to the F.O. He is in much closer accord with the P.M. than Curzon is.³

It is little wonder that he began to fear that his replacement would become permanent and quickly returned to the Foreign Office.

The Foreign Office approach to policy for Egypt was one of disengagement and reflected the general atmosphere of the day. Nearly a year after Egypt's independence Murray wrote in retrospect that British policy 'was one of disentanglement. That is to say, it was designed to shift on to Egyptian shoulders the responsibility for the conduct of Egyptian affairs.'⁴ With respect to the Residency, this meant

1. Robert Rhodes James, Memoirs of a Conservative: J.C.C. Davidson's Memoirs and Papers, 1910-1937 (London, 1969), pp.147-8.
2. The temporary nature of the Bonar Law government may be seen from the fact that the Prime Minister was dissuaded only with difficulty from declaring at the outset that he would hold office for only one year. Blake, op.cit., p.464.
3. Jones, Whitehall Diary, I, 201. Although obviously prejudiced, Austin Chamberlain made similar comments about Curzon's ill-health and weakness during the Bonar Law government. Keith Middlemas and John Barnes, Baldwin: A Biography (London, 1968), p.126.
4. Murray, Memorandum, February 13, 1923, FO/371/8960.

a great degree of freedom in policy formulation in Cairo. Owen Tweedy, the liaison officer at the Residency, noted after a conversation with Murray and Ingram at the Foreign Office on December 23, 1922, that 'what it came to he [Murray] said [wa]s that it was easier if policy were outlined in Cairo and communicated to the Foreign Office for approval.'¹ Thus initiative over developments remained with the Residency in Cairo.

The basic context of policy formulation in the Residency was the preservation of the status quo on the four reserved points and the maintenance of public order in Egypt. The need to preserve the status quo stemmed from the conditional nature of the February declaration and would remain so until there was a permanent Anglo-Egyptian settlement.² Public order was especially important since it affected the welfare of foreign interests and residents in Egypt and its absence was one of the reasons for the original British involvement in the region. The continuing British responsibility for the protection of foreign interests meant that public order remained a vital British concern.³ In addition, progress towards a final settlement was predicated upon stability and order in Egypt.

Within this framework, the aim of the Residency was to retire from an active 'ministering' role in Egyptian affairs and instead to become a watchful arbiter between factions such as the Palace, the Ministry and, at a later date, the Wafd opposition. This was translated into two areas of activity: disengagement from local affairs as quickly as possible; and, assuring adoption of such measures and laws that would remove the final obstacles standing in the way of negotiations. It was necessary to complete in Cairo the work begun in London.

Consequences of Independence

The introduction of the symbolic aspects of Egypt's new status, the trappings

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1. This conversation began on the topic of Foreign Office difficulties with Parliamentary Questions because of insufficient information and then moved to more general issues. Tweedy, Memorandum, 9/1/23, FO/141/484(278).
 2. The importance of the status quo was the reason for the pre-independence Scott-Tharwat PROCES VERBAL, January 20, 1921, FO/141/515(14382 Pt.I).
 3. For an analysis of British responsibility for public order developing from occupation, the protectorate, and the new doctrine of responsibility, see: Amos to Kerr, April 22, 1922, FO/141/430(5512).

of independence, was the first and most obvious step to be taken to demonstrate the new approach adopted by the British. Ahmad Fuad was finally permitted on March 15 to assume the title of King instead of Sultan. Henceforth he would be styled 'His Majesty', an honorific rather abruptly denied him the previous year by Curzon.¹ In addition, the British king's birthday would no longer be a general public holiday in Egypt, and Egypt's ruler would not be required in future to call officially on the High Commissioner - indicating a new order of precedence. Prayers for the High Commissioner in English churches in Egypt also would be discontinued.²

Another visible sign of Egypt's nominal independence was the fact that a combined Annual Report for Egypt and the Sudan was now deemed inappropriate and its publication was suspended. For the first time since 1899 the report on the affairs of Egypt and the Sudan would be separated and a smaller report on the Sudan alone would be published. The aim was twofold according to Lindsay: 'By discontinuing the one we mark a change; by continuing the other we emphasize no change.'³

The questions about the High Commissioner's status and title were not as straightforward and easily resolved. After taking office, Tharwat, the new Prime Minister, appealed to Allenby that the terms hitherto used for the High Commissioner and the Residency, Na'ib al-Malik [the King's Representative] and Dar al-Himaya [the House of the Protectorate] respectively, be changed because of their unfortunate association with Egypt's previous status as a protectorate. Allenby readily agreed to substitute the terms al-Mandub al-Sami [the High Commissioner] and Dar al-Mandub

1. The correspondence regarding Fuad's title is summarised in a letter from Vansittart, Curzon's Private Secretary, to Capt. Clive Wigram, King George V's Private Secretary, March 13, 1922, FO/371/7732.
2. A series of ceremonial changes were initiated by Allenby and reported in Allenby to Curzon, March 14, 1922, Tel. No. 122, FO/371/7732. These changes were originally discussed in the London meeting of February 20, following Lloyd George's capitulation. Possibly the most significant of these changes in the Muslim East was the fact that prayers would no longer be said for the High Commissioner in English churches. This roughly corresponds to mentioning the ruler's name in the Khutba [sermon] in the Friday service in the Mosque, a sign of allegiance to the ruler. Hence the importance of the deletion of Allenby's name from the Christian Sunday service as a sign of Egypt's independence. 'Khutba', Encyclopaedia of Islam, A.J. Wensinck, vol. II, pt. 2, pp. 980-82.
3. R.C.L.[indsay]., Minute, April 7 to Curzon to Allenby, April 8, 1922, Tel. No. 114, FO/371/7766. The combined Annual Report was instituted by Cromer to indicate the progress of the reforms and administration of Egypt and Sudan under Britain's tutelage.

al-Sami [the High Commissioner's Residency] in their place.

Tharwat, however, wished to emphasize Egypt's new position even more dramatically and revived the proposal first raised by the Egyptian delegation during the 1921 negotiations, namely, that Britain's representative in Egypt have the title of 'Ambassador'. He called for the adoption of the terms Safir [Ambassador] and Safara [Embassy] and promised that only the British representative would enjoy this diplomatic rank. Tharwat urged its acceptance because it would indicate to Egypt and to the world 'the altered relation in which Egypt now stands to Great Britain.'¹

Allenby was willing to agree even to this change because of Tharwat's assurances and the public benefit that would accrue to the new government, essentially Allenby's creature. Officials at the Foreign Office, however, took a completely different position. They were not impressed with Tharwat's arguments and they believed that 'Sarwat is weakening and trying to support himself by getting concessions from us.'² In any event, Curzon refused to permit the change of the High Commissioner's title to Ambassador because of the difficulties this would entail in the administration of martial law and because previously such a change 'was expressly vetoed by the Cabinet.'³ It was soon apparent that, given the indeterminate and conditional nature of Egypt's new status, any issue beyond mere ceremony which involved the political and administrative consequences of independence could be resolved only with difficulty.

One area in which the Residency did move quickly was in the transfer of many aspects of domestic administration to native control. 'Egyptianisation' was believed to be the means for active disengagement from Egypt's internal affairs. The need for such a process was one of the reasons for and, then, a direct consequence of the February declaration. According to Allenby, 'It was intended that the declaration of Egyptian independence should give definite impetus to the Egyptianisation of Government Departments...'⁴

This view was not a recent development, but was accepted in the Residency long

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1. Allenby to Curzon, March 22, 1922, Tel. No. 134, FO/371/7732.
 2. R.C.L [indsay]., Minute, March 23, 1922, to ibid.
 3. Curzon to Allenby, March 25, 1922, Tel. No. 102, FO/371/7732. This debate was interesting since Curzon's emphasis on the administration of martial law by the High Commissioner, and Allenby's minimising of that function indicates their differing conceptions of the role of the High Commissioner.
 4. Allenby to Curzon, September 30, 1922, Desp. No. 799, FO/371/7737.

before the events of 1922. As early as September 1919, Clayton, one of Allenby's closest advisers, told Gertrude Bell in Iraq that 'He would leave the Egyptian Ministers without British advisers, but give the High Commissioner a British adviser in each department.'¹ The policy of 'Egyptianisation' was consistently advocated by the Residency until the final weeks of the protectorate. It was reflected in the letter Allenby proposed to send to the Sultan in January 1922 in which he declared that 'As to any desire to interfere in internal administration of Egypt, His Majesty's Government have sufficiently stated and repeated that their most ardent desire is to place in Egyptian hands conduction of their own affairs.'²

After the declaration of independence, 'Egyptianisation' was vigorously pursued. The first changes were in the functions of the British advisers to the various Egyptian ministries.³ In a notice sent on March 4, 1922 to the advisers and acting advisers, Allenby informed them that because of Egypt's new status and the need for responsible government, their positions would be re-defined:

In the course of years the tradition has grown up that the responsibility of the Minister is shared by his adviser. But the time has come to recognize that in future the function of the adviser will be limited to giving advice to the Minister, who will be alone responsible for the decisions which he may judge it necessary to take.⁴

Furthermore, Allenby also anticipated the abolition of several adviserships and in this connection expressed 'full sympathy with the desire of the Egyptian Government to accelerate the replacement of Europeans by qualified Egyptians in official positions, and, in cases where qualified Egyptians are not at present available, to take the necessary measures without delay to prepare suitable candidates.'⁵

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1. Burgoyne, loc.cit. Clayton, with support from the other advisers, pressed this view on Allenby until independence. For example, see: Clayton, Memorandum, January 1, 1922, SAD, Clayton Papers, 470/14.
 2. Allenby to Curzon, January 12, 1922, Tel. No. 19, C.P. 3614, CAB/24/132.
 3. The major advisers were Financial (established in 1883); Judicial (1891); Interior (1894); Public Works (1904); and, Public Instruction (1906). For the history and functions of the different advisers, see: J. Field, Minute, May 2, 1921, FO/371/6332.
 4. Notice to Advisers in Allenby to Curzon, March 4, 1922, Desp. No. 146, FO/371/7732.
 5. Ibid. The first major advisership abolished was in the Ministry of Interior. Clayton advocated the abolition of his own position because he felt that it would be more logical to have a British Director of Public Security in the Ministry to protect foreign lives. Clayton to Residency, 11th April and 13th April, 1922, SAD, Clayton Papers, 470/15, and Scott to Tharwat, May 14, 1922, FO/371/7793.

The only advisers whose positions were not seriously affected were the Financial and Judicial Advisers insofar as their functions affected the preservation of the status quo.

Other visible signs of 'Egyptianisation' were also quickly introduced. At the suggestion of E.M. Dowson, the Financial Adviser, the practice of selecting foreign officials through a Selection Board sitting annually in London was abolished. The retention of such a British dominated body 'under present conditions...would be difficult to defend,' and in any event it would soon lose its British character as a result of administrative changes.¹

Perhaps one of the most important and possibly unforeseen effects of 'Egyptianisation' was the change in the character of the British establishment in Cairo. Previously the British advisers and senior officials enjoyed immense influence in determining proposed policy in Cairo. 'Egyptianisation' changed this situation. The influence of these officials decreased with the diminution of their responsibility or with the departure of figures such as Clayton after the abolition of his position. Only Amos and Dowson retained their former importance because their authority and position were not seriously impaired. In addition Amos' great personal influence with Allenby continued unchanged because of the length of his service in Egypt and his close association with the High Commissioner during all major crises since the war. In his central position as Judicial Adviser to the Egyptian government as well as the Residency legal adviser, Amos functioned in all spheres of Egyptian affairs and his ideas served as the basis for many of the important policy decisions made in Cairo.²

Nevertheless, after 1922 Allenby, in general, began to rely more heavily for advice and assistance on the Residency staff. Within time they regained many of the functions and much of the authority they enjoyed before the First World War. The

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1. Dowson to Chancery, April 18, 1922, FO/141/515(14382, Pt.I). Also, Dowson Circular Letter to Advisers at Ministries of Communications etc., March 25, 1922 in ibid.
 2. Amos was virtually a one man braintrust. For example, Allenby's Desp. No. 836, October 5, 1922, outlining future policy was based almost verbatim on Amos to Residency, October 11, 1922, FO/141/516(14431, Pt.I); Amos was instrumental in drafting some of the articles in the 1923 Constitution, Furness to Kerr, 18/10/22 in ibid; or, Amos' note to Wiggin, Second Secretary, 30.11.22, on the need for a general survey of British powers, responsibilities and policy on foreign interests led to Allenby to MacDonald, July 28, 1924, Desp. No. 486, FO/141/452(16860).

major figures to emerge from this group were Ernest S. Scott, the Minister Plenipotentiary and Acting High Commissioner in Allenby's absence; Archibald Clark-Kerr, Selby's successor as First Secretary at the Residency and author of many of Allenby's political cables; and, Robert Furness, the Acting Oriental Secretary who was particularly important in advising Allenby on Egyptian affairs.¹ Together with Amos, these officials were instrumental in developing policy in the eighteen month transitional period that followed independence. They left their mark on those areas, a constitution, an act of indemnity so that martial law could be ended, and safeguards for foreign officials, deemed vital to regularisation and the start of negotiations for a final settlement.

Ironically the attempt to prepare Egypt for total British disengagement from its political and internal affairs meant that, in the short term, at least, Allenby and the Residency would eventually have to play as active a part in Egyptian affairs as before. Thus, in tones echoing Granville's Circular Memorandum of 1883,² Amos only six months after Egypt's independence, could write that it was the obligation of King Fuad 'to direct his policy as not to embarrass that of the British Government, and in this respect to be guided by the advice of the British Government.'³

Foreign Affairs: Egypt and Europe

One of the most important areas in which Egypt's new status was indicated was that of foreign affairs. For example, Ernest Scott's letter of March 16 to the representatives of the foreign powers in Cairo notified them that relations with the Egyptian government 'would in future be conducted directly with the Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs,'⁴ and to Egypt's right to accede to minor international

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1. For examples of the functions of these officials, see: FO/141/516(14431, Pts I and II); and, FO/141/484(278).
 2. The relevant passage was: '...the position in which Her Majesty's Government are placed towards His Highness the Khedive imposes upon them the duty of giving advice with the object of securing that the order of things to be established shall be of a satisfactory character...' Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Granville to Her Majesty's Representative..., January 3, 1883, Egypt No.2 (1883) [C.-2563], pp.34-6.
 3. Amos to Allenby, October 11, 1922, FO/141/430(5512, Pt.III).
 4. Allenby to Curzon, March 16, 1922, Desp. No. 193, FO/371/7733.

conventions.¹ Another example was Egypt's exclusion from the system of imperial preferences in commerce.² However, despite these formalities, it was quickly apparent that Britain felt that foreign affairs, generally, and the relation of Egypt to the European powers, specifically, was an issue of major significance. The view was taken that it was imperative to outline the role of foreign powers in Egypt as well as define and, in actual fact, limit Egypt's position abroad.

The initial phase was the determination of what Britain considered to be an acceptable role for the foreign powers. This was seen in the development of an exclusionary doctrine to prevent the possibility of foreign meddling in Egypt and the assurance of the primacy of British interests in that country, actually a continuation of British policy in Egypt since the occupation of 1882.

Discussion of the role of foreign powers in Egypt began even before Lloyd George's announcement of February 28. Murray, in a memorandum drafted on February 18, raised the questions of when and how the issue should be handled.³ He believed that Britain's objections to foreign interference should be made known to the powers at the same time that they were informed of Egypt's new status.

There were two possible ways of accomplishing this. The first course was to follow earlier British practice and have the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs announce in a broad public statement Britain's opposition to foreign intervention in an area in which she was vitally concerned. This had been done previously by Sir Edward Grey in the House of Commons on March 28, 1895 when there had been rumours of a possible French expedition to the Sudan,⁴ as well as by Lord Lansdowne, on May 5, 1903, when he told the House of Lords that Britain would oppose the establishment of any foreign naval base or fortified port in the Persian Gulf.⁵

1. For example, Britain agreed to Egypt's accession to the International Opium Convention of 1912: 'As Egypt is now a sovereign State she can accede to the convention of her own will.' There was, however, total opposition to any Egyptian attempt to accede on behalf of the Sudan which, it was believed, would undermine the status quo. Curzon to Scott, April 24, 1922, Desp. No. 469, FO/141/451(14509).
2. Again, there was one rule for Egypt and another for the Sudan which continued 'to be treated as part of the British Empire for the purpose of Imperial Preference.' D.G. Osborne to The Secretary, Custom House, London, April 20, 1922, FO/371/7766.
3. Murray, Memorandum, February 18, 1922, FO/371/7731.
4. Sir Edward Grey, March 28, 1895, Parl. Deb., 4th Series, XXXII(1895), 352-3.
5. Lord Lansdowne, May 5, 1903, Parl. Deb., 4th Series, CXXI(1903), 1343-54.

The second and preferred course, according to Murray, was to follow the American precedent of the more formal Monroe Doctrine whereby the American President, James Monroe, had warned the European powers in 1823 that the Americas were henceforth closed to European colonisation.¹

Given the options open to the British government, Murray felt that any formal communication to the powers informing them of Egypt's new status should add

that having declared, and being desirous to maintain, the independence of Egypt, we could not view the intervention of any other power in the internal affairs of that country or any threat of aggression on her territory in any other light than the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards Great Britain.²

This memorandum provided the framework for discussions involving Cecil B. Hurst, the Foreign Office Legal Adviser, Lindsay, Murray and Amos. Hurst and Lindsay concurred with Murray's suggestions on February 20,³ and the memorandum then became the basis for a series of communications, such as the circular despatch of March 20 to Britain's representatives abroad. The despatch, after informing a number of foreign powers of the circumstances of Egypt's independence, explicitly limited and defined the role of those powers in Egypt:

The termination of the British protectorate over Egypt involves...no change in the status quo as regards the position of other Powers in Egypt itself.

The welfare and integrity of Egypt are necessary to the peace and safety of the British Empire, which will therefore always maintain as an essential British interest the special relations between itself and Egypt long recognised by other Governments. These special relations are defined in the declaration recognising Egypt as an independent sovereign state. His Majesty's Government have laid them down on matters in which the rights and interests of the British Empire are vitally involved, and will not admit them to be questioned or discussed by any other Power. In pursuance of this principle, they will regard as an unfriendly act any attempt at interference in the affairs of Egypt by another power, and they will consider any aggression against the territory of Egypt as an act to be repelled with all the means at their command.⁴

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1. James Monroe, cited in J.D. Richardson (ed.), A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897 (Washington, 1896-9), II, 207-20.
 2. Murray, Memorandum, February 18, 1922, FO/371/7731.
 3. Cecil B. Hurst, Minute, February 20, 1920; and, R.C.L[Lindsay]., Minute, February 20, to ibid.
 4. Curzon, Circular Despatch to His Majesty's Representatives at Buenos Aires, etc., March 20, 1922, FO/371/7731.

The response of many of the powers to Egypt's new status and the British 'Monroe' Doctrine was cautious but, on the whole, not hostile. The United States and Belgium, for example, were non-committal, while Austria declared 'its readiness to recognise these [vital British] interests at all times to the fullest degree.'¹ Italy, however, was immediately concerned about the general effect of Egyptian independence on her position in Tripoli and then about the 'vagueness' of the British doctrine where it touched upon the protection of foreign interests in Egypt.² This vagueness was carefully cultivated by the British for diplomatic reasons. Lindsay on another occasion explained that

It is to our own interest to keep our declaration to the Powers as free as possible from all definitions & interpretations, which can only be trammels to us. Just as America won't allow any one to interpret the original Monroe Doctrine except herself, so we must keep in our own hands the interpretation of this Egyptian Declaration, & not only that, but we must avoid making it any more definite than it is. Half the virtue of the Monroe Doctrine is its indefiniteness & the actual variability of meaning which America has allowed to appear in its application.

Therefore we must carefully avoid saying what we mean and when we have to reply to questions we must make our own answers as short and as unsatisfactory as is consonant with courtesy.³

Most of the difficulty over Egypt's new status and the singular nature of Anglo-Egyptian relations was caused by France. Because of the vague language of Curzon's note, the French colony in Egypt, and later the French government, apparently jumped to the conclusion that the British 'Monroe' Doctrine meant the abolition of capitulations which were the foundation of the European powers' privileged commercial and legal position in Egypt.⁴ The French then attempted to use the assumed

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1. Akers Douglas to Curzon, April 7, 1922, Desp. No. 107, FO/371/7733. For the attitudes of the other powers, see: Minutes by Murray, Lindsay, Crowe and Curzon, March 27 to Hardinge to Curzon, March 23, 1922, Tel. No. 742, FO/371/7732.
 2. Sir Ronald Graham, Ambassador to Rome, reported 'serious alarm in Italy' after his meeting with the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs on March 17. Graham to Curzon, March 18, 1922, Tel. No. 144, FO/371/7732. Concern over the 'vagueness' of the British doctrine was expressed by the Italian Ambassador to London, de Martino, in an interview with Lindsay on April 24. Oliphant to Scott, April 27, 1922, Desp. No. 483, FO/371/7733.
 3. R.C.L. [Lindsay], Minute, March 25 to Hardinge to Curzon, March 22, 1922, Tel. No. 718, FO/371/7732.
 4. Hardinge to Curzon, March 22, 1922, Tel. No. 718, FO/371/7732.

abrogation of capitulatory rights as a means of forcing reciprocal British concessions of similar rights in the French Zone of Morocco as well as for obtaining British agreement with the French position on the Tangier question.¹

There was some doubt in the Foreign Office as to whether the French had indeed been misled by the language of Curzon's note. There was the feeling that they were attempting to use the opportunity to secure undeserved concessions. Murray commented that 'it is possible that this is a verbal threat of a renewal of the policy of pin-pricks in Egypt if we do not fall into line with their wishes in these matters.'² Hardinge concluded the debate by informing Poincaré that Britain acknowledged 'the recognition by the French Government of the termination of the protectorate,' while dissociating such recognition from the capitulations or Tangier.³ Britain thus sought to pin down its major diplomatic rival in the region to an acceptance of the wide scope of British interests in Egypt and yet narrowly define the role of other powers in Egypt.

While Britain was limiting the position of European powers in Egypt, there was a parallel attempt to limit Egyptian diplomatic activity in Europe. This applied to Egyptian participation in a major international conference, such as the 1922 Lausanne Conference, as well as Egyptian membership in the League of Nations. In both cases, the basic approach was to give Egypt, if necessary, the appearance of participation while in fact offering her only a limited measure of diplomatic freedom.

The Lausanne Conference, which convened at the end of 1922, was called to revise the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres between the Allies and the Ottoman Empire. This treaty outlined the future of Turkey and the status and obligations of the Arab successor states carved out of the Arab territory of the Ottoman Empire. After the Greek invasion of Anatolia in May 1919 and Kemal Ataturk's rise to power, the Treaty of Sèvres, which would have made Turkey into a minor European dependancy, became a

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1. Poincaré to Hardinge, March 22, 1922. Enclosure in Hardinge to Curzon, March 23, 1922, Tel. No. 742, FO/371/7732.
 2. Murray, Minute, March 27 to Hardinge to Curzon, March 23, 1922, Tel. No. 722, FO/371/7732. Lindsay, Crowe and Curzon in minutes of the same date, agreed with Murray's analysis.
 3. Hardinge to Poincaré, April 5, 1922. Enclosure in Hardinge to Curzon, April 5, 1922, Tel. No. 857, FO/371/7733.

dead letter. Still there was a need to organise the Middle East in an acceptable framework and to resolve such questions as Turkey's future, nationality in and the status of the successor states, and the responsibility of these states for their share of the Ottoman Empire's enormous state debt. It was to these ends that the Lausanne Conference was convened.

With respect to Egypt, Articles 101-114 of the Treaty of Sèvres were particularly significant.¹ These dealt with the renunciation of Turkish rights in and title to Egypt (Article 101); recognition by Turkey that Britain would provide consular and diplomatic protection for Egyptian nationals (Article 107); renunciation by Turkey in Britain's favour of responsibility for the neutrality of the Suez Canal as defined by the 1888 Constantinople Convention (Article 109); Turkish recognition of the Anglo-Egyptian condominium over the Sudan (Articles 113 and 114); regularisation of Turkish and Egyptian nationality problems (Articles 102, 103, 105 and 106); immunity for Egypt from liability vis a vis Turkey for acts committed during the war (Article 104); regularisation of commercial relations and tariffs between Turkey and Egypt (Article 108); the transfer of Turkish state property in Egypt to the Egyptian government (Article 110); and, finally, the assumption by Egypt of responsibility for the 1855, 1891 and 1894 Ottoman state loans hitherto secured on Egypt's tribute to the Ottoman Empire (Article 112).

As a result of altered conditions both in Turkey and in Egypt in 1922, the British government was mainly interested in revising and retaining those articles of the Sèvres Treaty which affected Britain's vital interests. These fell into five major areas:²

- i. The Turkish renunciation of all rights to Egypt and the Sudan combined with recognition of Egypt's new status as an independent kingdom as defined by the British declaration of February 1922.
- ii. The transfer of Turkish responsibility for the neutrality of the Suez Canal to Egypt with Britain as guarantor of Egypt's ability to afford the necessary protection.
- iii. The treatment of Egypt on the same footing as the Allied Powers

1. For the details of the articles and their specific significance, see: E.M.B. Ingram, Egypt and the Treaty of Sèvres, October 19, 1922, FO/371/7952.

2. This analysis is based on SUGGESTED REVISION OF ARTICLES IN TREATY OF SÈVRES RELATING TO EGYPT, FO/371/7953. This was drafted sometime in October 1922 after consultation with Tharwat Pasha and hence reflects Egyptian interests, such as the nationality clauses, as well.

with respect to acts committed against Turkey during the war.

- iv. The regularisation of Egyptian nationality and recognition of Egyptian naturalisation laws.
- v. Egypt's continuing obligation to service the Egyptian tribute loans as Egypt's responsibility for her portion of the Ottoman state debt.

Essentially the British government sought through a revised treaty to obtain Turkish and international recognition of Egypt's new status as defined by the British declaration - including the four reserved points, to assure British protection of the Suez Canal, and, finally, to secure continued interest payments to the European bondholders of the Egyptian portion of the Ottoman state debt, part of which was guaranteed by Britain.

While discussions over the substance of the revisions were taking place, questions arose about Egypt's association with the ongoing negotiations. Allenby suggested on March 23 that Egypt be a party to any new treaty since 'Abolition of Protectorate appears to me to deprive His Majesty's Government of adequate title to represent Egypt in the matter.'¹ Allenby, on Amos's advice, was concerned with the impact of the negotiations within Egypt. He was afraid that any treaty concluded by Britain alone would not have the force of law in Egypt, particularly in the matters of nationality and the tribute loans.

The Foreign Office's initial response to Egyptian participation was negative. Murray wrote that 'I can see neither any necessity for, nor any advantage in Egypt being a party to a revised treaty of Sèvres, and the argument adduced by Lord Allenby...does not seem to have any weight.'² The Foreign Office consensus was that giving Egypt a voice in such negotiations, even if they affected her directly, could only be harmful. Oliphant, writing on Curzon's behalf, informed Allenby on April 10 that

There will, in all probability, be sufficient difficulty in reaching agreement as to the revision of the present text amongst the actual signatories, and these difficulties would be greatly increased by the intervention of Egypt whose delegates would certainly take strong exception to articles 113 and 114 [regarding the Sudan] and probably also

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- 1. Allenby to Curzon, March 23, 1922, Tel. No. 136, FO/371/7732, which is a condensation of Allenby to Curzon, March 18, 1922, Desp. No. 195, FO/371/7732, based on Amos to Allenby, March 12, 1922, enclosed in this Despatch.
 - 2. Murray, Minute, 24.3.22, to ibid.

article 112 [the tribute loans].¹

After months of complex negotiations on the substance of the revisions, it was decided by October 1922 that some form of Egyptian association with a new treaty was necessary. This was only because Egyptian accession was believed necessary to guarantee British interests and to reassure the powers that the interests of the European bondholders would be secured. Allenby later explained that

The effects of this accession would have been to invest the unilateral declaration of the 28th February, 1922 with the force of a bilateral agreement between Great Britain and Egypt. With such an agreement His Majesty's Government could have afforded to regard the future relationship of the two countries with equanimity, as treaty sanction would have been secured to the reservation for future settlement of the four questions described in the declaration as being vital to British interests.²

Egypt, however, would still not have any real role in the negotiations and would only accede to the treaty after it had been drafted.

Allenby continued to be concerned about the effects of excluding Egypt from European diplomacy. Although he admitted that there were dangers in widening the basis of the conference, he nevertheless cabled on October 17 that 'I must impress upon Your Lordship extreme inadvisability of appearing once again to seek to exclude Egypt from an international conference at which its affairs are to be discussed,' since this 'would be interpreted as casting doubt on genuineness of Egyptian independence.'³ But even Allenby, an advocate of Egyptian participation, was more interested in giving Egypt a visible role than a real one. In this connection, he proposed that an Egyptian delegation go to Lausanne only to sign a protocol of accession to the relevant clauses to satisfy Egyptian amour propre.

1. Oliphant to Allenby, April 10, 1922, Desp. No. 408, FO/371/7732. It is interesting that Allenby received Treasury support over Egyptian participation in any arrangement. The Treasury, because of British guarantees for part of the loans, was interested in having Egypt formally committed to continued service of those loans. H.E. Fass (Treasury) to Malkin (Foreign Office), April 8, 1922, FO/371/7733.
2. Allenby to MacDonald, February 23, 1924, Desp. No. 126, Egypt, Annual Report, 1922, FO/371/10060.
3. Allenby to Curzon, October 17, 1922, Tel. No. 350, FO/371/7904. The dangers of widening the basis of the conference referred to Poincaré's demand, as quid pro quo for Egyptian participation, that the French protectorates of Tunis and Morocco participate. Curzon to Allenby, October 24, 1922, FO/371/7952.

This was especially important because of local agitation for a seat at the conference and Tharwat's request to that effect.¹

The possibility of a separate treaty between Egypt and Turkey was raised and then ruled out because of British concern over direct negotiations between the two Muslim states. Finally a method was sought which would satisfy Britain's need for Egyptian agreement and at the same time limit Egypt's role in the Lausanne proceedings without this being too obvious. Further negotiations took place between Allenby and Tharwat in order to arrive at a mutually satisfactory position in the form of a secret exchange of notes or letters.²

Unfortunately, just as a solution appeared possible, Tharwat's position weakened and he had to retreat from his promise to exchange notes lest these become public and destroy him politically. Instead he offered a personal letter guaranteeing his loyalty at Lausanne and under these circumstances Curzon agreed.³ However, by the end of November 1922 Tharwat's government had fallen and with it went the delicate edifice constructed by the British assuring formal Egyptian acceptance of a revised treaty, while depriving her of a real voice in international affairs. Subsequent negotiations proved futile.

A similar effort was made to limit Egypt's position abroad and yet maintain the appearance of her independence when the possibility of an Egyptian application to join the League of Nations arose. On September 29, 1922, Allenby informed London of discussions in local political circles of such a step and he requested advice.⁴

In his reply, Curzon noted that the appearance of independence had to be sustained because.

An attitude of opposition on the part of His Majesty's Government towards the candidature of Egypt or an attempt to question her eligibility might not unnaturally be regarded by Egyptians as an admission that the independence conferred on their country by the termination of the British Protectorate was fictitious.⁵

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1. Allenby to Curzon, October 17, 1922, Tel. No. 353, FO/371/7904.
 2. Allenby to Curzon, October 29, 1922, Tel. No. 368, FO/371/7953.
 3. Scott to Curzon, November 13, 1922, Tel. No. 396, and, Curzon to Allenby, November 15, 1922, Tel. No. 398, FO/371/7953.
 4. Allenby to Curzon, September 29, 1922, Desp. No. 780, FO/371/7738.
 5. Curzon to Allenby, October 19, 1922, Desp. No. 1283, FO/371/7738.

Still, Curzon reminded Allenby that 'only fully self-governing States are eligible for membership and the League itself may hold that Egypt's full independence cannot be regarded as acquired until the "reserved subjects" have been settled by agreement with Great Britain.'¹ In the event of a successful Egyptian application, supported visibly by Britain, there was the likelihood that Egypt would then turn to the International Court of Justice to resolve disputes over the four reserved points. Then, 'the only course open to His Majesty's Government would be to contend that reference to any third party...is precluded by the terms with which the withdrawal of the British Protectorate was notified to the Powers.'²

Again, as at Lausanne, Britain was willing eventually to support the appearance of independence, while, in concrete terms, restricting Egypt's position abroad. In the case of membership in the League of Nations, even if Britain supported an Egyptian application, this would be meaningless because the scope of Egypt's activity abroad would be narrowly defined.

1. Idem.

2. Idem.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE STRUGGLE FOR DISENGAGEMENT - 1922-1923

The initial eighteen month period that followed Egypt's independence constituted a struggle by the British for disengagement from the country's internal affairs. The three major objectives of the struggle were the establishment of a constitutional regime, the enactment of an indemnity law to enable the ending of martial law, and a settlement for foreign officials in the Egyptian civil service. These were essential to the success of Britain's new policy. Only after the regularisation of Egypt's political and administrative systems could negotiations for a final Anglo-Egyptian settlement be entertained seriously.

Objectives of Disengagement

The first and most important area of initial British interest was that of a constitutional regime for Egypt. The origins of the Residency's desire for a representative and responsible government were ^{found} in the pre-independence need to establish a broadly based regime that would free the High Commissioner from the onus of governing without local support. This was reflected in Allenby's draft letter to the Sultan in January 1922 in which the expectation of constitutional government was mentioned within the context of independence.¹ Although reference to a constitution was eventually deleted, Amos noted months later that the Residency still felt 'that the expectation of His Majesty's Government that a constitution would be instituted was clearly indicated at the time, though no specific precepts were laid down.'² After independence Residency interest in a constitution continued.

Some writers have argued that Allenby supported a constitution primarily as compensation to Tharwat for supporting him during the earlier struggle with London over independence. Since Allenby needed Tharwat's support in order to convince London that a unilaterally imposed policy was feasible, this 'committed him in turn to support a constitution.'³

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1. Allenby to Curzon, January 12, 1922, Tel. No. 19, FO/371/7730.
 2. Amos to Allenby, October 11, 1922, FO/141/430/5512 (Part 3).
 3. E. Kedourie, "The Genesis of the Egyptian Constitution of 1923" in P.M. Holt (ed.), Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt (London, 1968), p.349.

While Allenby's Egyptian allies undoubtedly would benefit from a constitutional regime that limited the authority of the Sovereign, this was by no means the only reason for Residency support. There was the deep-seated conviction in the Residency that 'British policy is bound up with the establishment of Parliamentary institutions in Egypt,' because 'Only the passing of the Constitution will make it possible to begin the last stage towards accomplishment of H.M.G.'s policy'¹ - a treaty with Egypt. It was believed that 'the opposite party in any negotiations precedent to a Treaty must be a Government representative of the majority of Egyptian opinion.'² As Allenby noted later, one of the main functions of the Tharwat ministry was 'to elaborate a Constitution providing for Ministerial responsibility to a Parliament whose creation was a necessary antecedent to any fruitful renewal of negotiations with His Majesty's Government.'³

Allenby's support for constitutionalism was also a logical consequence of his long-standing desire to create a sympathetic moderate elite that would ensure British interests while enabling him to suppress perceived elements of disorder, such as Zaghlul and his followers. Thus support for Tharwat and constitutionalism did not result merely from the need to repay past loyalty. It resulted from the conviction that support for Tharwat would strengthen the moderates on whom Allenby's hopes were pinned.

The second point that had to be resolved before a final settlement was possible was the abolition of British imposed and administered martial law. Instituted at the start of the war, it now became an impediment to the British position since it meant that British military authority was constantly invoked in Egypt's internal affairs. Although critics of British policy maintained 'that martial law is little else than an instrument by which we still impose our [British] will upon a country we have professed to make independent,' its application was far more complex:

British martial law in Egypt is in the nature of an Egyptian Defence of the Realm Act, and only by its help could the Egyptian Government, during an abnormal period, overcome, as it was obliged to overcome, its legislative weakness in the face of capitulatory privileges. Martial law was thus used extensively for economic purposes, and

1. R. F[urness]., 14/X [1922], FO/141/430 (5512) (Pt. 3).

2. Ibid.

3. Allenby to Curzon, October 15, 1922, Desp. No. 836, FO/371/7738.

economic conditions are not yet normal; it is through martial law that the import of sugar is controlled, and that landlords are prevented from exacting exorbitant house-rents. No other means have yet been found of making foreign subjects contribute towards the provision of night-watchmen, or of regulating through passport control the admission of persons into Egypt. In other respects, martial law has supplemented the native Penal Code, of which a revision was compiled two years ago, but is now not yet entirely suitable.¹

Thus the termination of martial law was vital for the disengagement of British authority from Egypt's internal affairs. However, this complex and unpopular mechanism, the object of much Egyptian resentment, could be ended only after the enactment of an indemnity law. Since martial law is not recognised in civil law, an indemnity act was needed to prevent legal proceedings on questions raised as a result of actions taken under martial law. The drafting of indemnity laws began in London and in Cairo before the 1921 Anglo-Egyptian negotiations,² but progress in this area was largely dependent on progress on a constitution. A generally accepted form of government and a system of legislation were required before the machinery of martial law could be dismantled.

The final area was the question of compensation for retiring or dismissed foreign officials, especially British, in the Egyptian civil service. The future of these officials had to be resolved because of the British government's sense of obligation to them for their services to the Empire, the need to pacify the British community in Egypt and their supporters in England, and, in the case of non-British foreign officials, because of Britain's commitment to secure foreign interests in Egypt. It should be added that although these officials generally entered the Egyptian civil service under British auspices, Britain viewed their future as an Egyptian responsibility.

The position of such officials was particularly important now because many were faced with unwilling retirement, resignation or dismissal since the conditions of their employment had changed with independence and the Residency was encouraging the process of Egyptianisation. Lord Lloyd, later one of the officials' strongest

1. Ibid.

2. Amos prepared a draft law in May 1921. Enclosed in Allenby to Curzon, June 9, 1921, Desp. No. 503, FO/371/6336. The Foreign Office legal advisers proposed a modified draft law in August 1921. Enclosed in Lindsay to Scott, August 24, 1921, Desp. No. , FO/371/6331.

supporters, painted a bleak picture of their future:

...it was already clear that...they would be working now in conditions entirely different from those for which they were recruited. Their prospects of promotion were almost completely destroyed, since it was only natural that an unfettered Egyptian Government would fill vacancies with Egyptians. At the same time their authority over their subordinates would be impaired, because these latter would inevitably go behind their backs to the elected representatives - a court of appeal which could hardly be expected to be impartial.¹

Although Lloyd's views may have been somewhat extreme, they were shared by many British officials. They had been asking continuously for an 'adequate' scheme of compensation for pensionable and non-pensionable foreign civil servants which they felt 'should be made condition precedent to granting power to Egyptian government to terminate or vary conditions of service.'² While the Residency was sympathetic to the Egyptianisation of the administration, they were nevertheless aware of the precarious position of Egypt's foreign officials.³ The realisation that this was caused by the shift in British policy which the Residency had advocated made it important that this issue also be resolved quickly during the transitional period following independence.

Tharwat, Fuad and Allenby (March-November 1922)

Ostensibly the reason for Britain's declaration of Egypt's independence and the debate between the British authorities in Cairo and London that had preceded it,

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1. Lloyd, op.cit., II, 67-8.
 2. Association of British Officials in Scott to Curzon, February 19, 1922, Tel. No. 78, FO/371/7749. After independence, Major Gayer-Anderson, an official in the Ministry of Interior and later Allenby's Oriental Secretary, commented that 'there has lately arisen great uneasiness amongst officials lest the main demands of Egypt having now been granted without reserve, the advantageous "compensation schemes" put forward to be embodied as part of an "agreement" between the two countries may go by the board.' Gayer-Anderson to Murray, A Note on the Compensation of British Officials, March 28, 1922, FO/371/7749.
 3. In a memorandum written only weeks after independence, Furness commented on the ease with which the status quo on officials could be violated by the Egyptian government. Kerr, in a minute of April 24, 1922, noted that he and Dowson agreed fully. R. F[urness] to Kerr, April 4, 1922, FO/141/515(14382) (Pt. 1).

was the need to create the political context that would assure Egypt's continued administration by a native ministry.

As Allenby had anticipated, a new ministry was quickly formed after independence without great difficulty.¹ The Sultan summoned Tharwat to the palace on the day of Allenby's return and he agreed to head a ministry whose declared aim would be a 'constitution in accordance with the principle of modern public right.'² Allenby was indeed satisfied with the new ministry's spirit and he expressed this sentiment in a cable to London: 'I find them all confident and ready to cooperate with me.'³ Furthermore, Allenby himself looked to the future hopefully. He wrote to Viscount Samuel, the British High Commissioner in Palestine, that 'Egypt has been behaving well, and I think that the new Ministry will work with us all right.'⁴

However, despite Allenby's confidence, the position of Tharwat and his ministry was extremely vulnerable. Tharwat had undertaken the unpopular task of governing and establishing a system of government without broad public support or the open cooperation of any political faction in Egypt. Even Allenby later had to admit that the new ministry 'commanded no great personal popularity...were deprived of the active assistance of Adly Pasha, and the respect and prestige attaching to him, and of a group of able and rising men who were his partisans, and...were certain to encounter the bitter hostility of the Zaghlulist and Watanist parties.'⁵

Furthermore, Tharwat who would no doubt use a constitution to bolster his weak popular and political position, was caught between the King and the High Commissioner. Fuad, on the one hand, would try to retain and perhaps expand his authority, while Allenby, on the other hand, would seek, despite his sympathy for Tharwat, to protect what he considered important British interests. Without Adli's visible support and faced with strong political opposition, the future of Tharwat's declared programme was in question.⁶

1. For a report of events immediately following Allenby's return to Cairo, see: Allenby to Curzon, February 28, 1922, Tel. No. 93, FO/371/7732.
2. Tharwat to Fuad, March 1, 1922 in Egyptian Mail, March 2, 1922, cited in FO/371/7732.
3. Allenby to Curzon, March 1, 1922, Tel. No. 97, FO/371/7732.
4. Allenby to Samuel, March 9, [1922], SAI, Samuel Papers, 100/I.
5. Allenby to Curzon, October 15, 1922, Desp. No. 836, FO/371/7738.
6. For a general survey of the political situation in Egypt at this time, see: P.J. Vatikiotis, The Modern History of Egypt (London, 1969), p.265ff.

The early months after independence were marked by the activities of the Constitutional Commission and it was during this period that the main lines of contention began to appear. As promised, one of the ministry's first acts was to establish the machinery for framing a constitution. Therefore, on April 3, Tharwat appointed a broad-based Constitutional Commission of thirty leading Egyptians. The Chairman of the Commission of Thirty was the respected former Prime Minister, Husayn Rushdi Pasha.¹

Although the Commission was fairly well-balanced, albeit conservative in outlook, it was immediately attacked by members of the still popular Wafd who called it lajnat al-ashqiya [Commission of Criminals]. Zaghlul's followers maintained that a constitution should not be drafted by the Commission, their opponents' creature, but should be the work of a constituent assembly which they believed they would control.²

At the Commission's very first session, the debates focused on the central issue of power and where it should reside. The basic questions of the King's authority and the extent of the electoral franchise were referred for resolution to an inner Subcommittee of Eighteen under Rushdi's chairmanship. The Commission was split between the 'King's men' who favoured real authority for the monarch and those who wanted him to enjoy only ceremonial powers. Rushdi and Tharwat's moderate supporters leaned towards a compromise which would give Fuad some power in order to realise most of the Commission's aims. Despite the persistent and vigorous debates, by the end of April the Residency believed that work on the constitution was progressing well and that 'Sarwat Pasha continues optimistic and hopeful for the future.'³

British satisfaction soon ended when the Commission began discussing the future of the Sudan. The British attitude towards the Sudan was quite different from their approach to Egypt. Having its roots in the period of the Sudan's reconquest, one author has commented that since then

The British mistrust of Egyptian intentions and capabilities in the

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1. For the establishment of the Commission as well as its composition, see: Saroit, 'Note au Conseil des Ministres,' 3 avril 1922, La Bourse Egyptienne, 5 avril 1922 in FO/371/7733.
 2. For details of the political struggle surrounding the Constitutional Commission and its activities, see: Kedourie, op.cit., p.351ff.
 3. Scott to Curzon, April 23, 1922, Desp. No. 311, FO/371/7733.

Sudan which had been a factor in the drafting of the Condominium Agreement, had developed with years of successful rule into a sense of unique moral responsibility, a feeling that legal niceties apart, the British administrators and the British government stood in a position of trusteeship towards the Sudanese.¹

It was this combination of 'mistrust' and a sense of 'moral responsibility' that led British officials in Egypt to advocate the 'de-Egyptianisation' of the Sudan at the very same time that they supported Egyptian independence. Keown-Boyd, one of Allenby's close advisers, wrote with the approval of the Governor-General of the Sudan, Sir Lee Stack, that the forthcoming Milner Report should

...point out the absurdity of claims made by Egyptians to Egyptian Nationalism for the Sudan, stating at the same time how the Sudan differs in race, tradition and sympathy from Egypt, and showing that Egypt's only legitimate interests in the Sudan are the safeguarding of her water supply and the protection of her frontiers from external aggression.²

This view prevailed after independence as well.

It was therefore an unpleasant shock for the Residency to learn on May 8 that the Commission intended to add a clause to the constitution stating that Egypt and the Sudan were one country and the King of Egypt was sovereign of both. Allenby immediately called upon Tharwat to warn of British disapproval and that 'If such a clause is put in constitution it may wreck whole agreement.'³ Tharwat promised to speak to the Commission, noting that its function was only advisory. In the meantime, Allenby attempted to suppress publication of the news of the Commission's intentions, but it was too late because the information had already appeared on the pages of al-Akhbar on that same day.⁴

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1. P.M. Holt, A History of the Sudan (London, 1963), pp.128-9.
 2. Keown-Boyd to Allenby, March 14, 1920, BLO, Milner Papers, Box 161. Even staunch British supporters of Egyptian nationalism, such as Valentine Chirol, the influential Times correspondent, balked at Egyptian claims to sovereignty over the Sudan: 'They [Egyptians] have, I submit, no right to claim it so long as we make good to them the expenditure which they have contributed towards its reconquest, and also undertake to supply Egypt in future with the legitimate share of the waters of the White and Blue Nile essential to her existence [sic].' V. Chirol to Gertrude Bell, March 1, 1920, Enclosed Memorandum, STAC, Chirol Papers.
 3. Allenby to Curzon, May 8, 1922, Tel. No. 174, FO/371/7733.
 4. Al-Akhbar published the Commission's decision as well as Rushdi's memorandum on the Sudan prepared earlier for the Egyptian delegation in London. Al-Akhbar, May 8, 1922 in Public Security Department, Report on the General Situation in Egypt, 4th to 10th May, 1922 in Allenby to Curzon, May 13, 1922, Desp. No. 376, FO/371/7742.

Allenby learned on May 9 that the resolution on the Sudan was the work of Rushdi's Subcommittee of Eighteen and not of the entire Commission. Previously Allenby had been under the impression that he had Tharwat's support and thus reported to London that 'President of the Council fully shares view that commission would be acting improperly in incorporating in a draft constitution for Egypt a clause dealing with the Sudan. He is supported by Cabinet and by Adly Pasha and his admonition may be expected to have full weight with commission.'¹ But apparently Tharwat and Adli could not oppose the Sudan clause lest they be attacked by their opponents for being British puppets. This appears to have been confirmed in an interview granted by Tharwat to al-Ahram on May 22. Tharwat reaffirmed his Ministry's approval of the work of the Egyptian delegation to London which served as the basis for the Sudan clause. He did concede, however, that 'whatever the point of view of each side, no change should be made in the actual status quo until negotiations had been both undertaken and completed.'²

In addition to difficulties over a constitution, the early months of independence indicated that public order - despite Egypt's new status, martial law and Zaghlul's exile - could not be maintained easily as long as the outstanding issues remained unresolved. On May 24, W.F. Cunliffe Cave, a British inspector in the Cairo police, was murdered. London's strong reaction reflected outrage at the continuing attacks on the British in Egypt as well as traditional British apprehension over the sentiments of the local population. Curzon angrily cabled Allenby on May 26 that 'The impunity with which murderous assaults are committed clearly demonstrates the inadequacy of preventive measures,' and demanded Egyptian compensation for the victims or their heirs.³ The Egyptian reply, disclaiming responsibility but offering ex gratia payments to the victims, meant that the absence of public order might complicate Anglo-Egyptian relations in the coming months. It was in this period that Allenby, under pressure from London, and Tharwat, faced with opposition in Egypt, would try to arrive at a mutually satisfactory arrangement.

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1. Allenby to Curzon, May 9, 1922, Tel. No. 176, FO/371/7733.
 2. Al-Ahram, May 22, 1922, cited in Public Security Department, Report on the General Situation in Egypt, May 18th to May 24th, 1922 in Allenby to Curzon, May 28, 1922, Desp. No. 421, FO/371/7742. For an analysis of Tharwat's and Adli's considerations, see: Kedourie, op.cit., pp.355-6.
 3. Curzon to Allenby, May 26, 1922, Tel. No. 155, FO/371/7734.

The difficulties continued into the summer months. The problems and disagreements over a settlement for foreign officials became acute. British officials in the Egyptian civil service were extremely dissatisfied and felt that their interests and safety were threatened by Residency policy. Tweedy at the Residency warned that

A considerable section of the [British] community is obviously expressing itself in unguarded and extreme terms with regard to the attitude of the Residency in respect of the protection of British interests in this country. The main point [of their view] is that H.E. [His Excellency, the High Commissioner] is being badly advised by Sir M. Amos in particular who has never been a popular official in the country.¹

This sentiment was widespread and on June 8 an official at the Ministry of Interior sympathetic to the Residency, privately wrote Murray of the growing resentment:

The general idea is that Sarwat leads Allenby by the nose and that the interests and safety of the English here are considered quite unimportant compared with the various diplomatic questions. Since Selby left, the Residency has, I think, lost touch to a great extent with the English community, and the feeling is that the Residency are more or less in with the natives and are ready to sacrifice the English to bolster up Sarwat.²

Officials at the Foreign Office were dismayed since this only reinforced their fears.³

Allenby therefore quickly attempted to reach an agreement with Tharwat. He offered the Prime Minister a compromise on the foreign officials, based on an earlier Foreign Office proposal. Tharwat, however, declined because he felt that such a settlement should be part of a final Anglo-Egyptian agreement, and that the present Ministry needed a mandate from a parliament in order to undertake such obligations. Tharwat later explained that acceptance of Allenby's scheme would mean 'that he would certainly be assassinated,' and in any event the Ministry would resign if pressed on this issue.⁴

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1. O.M. T[weedy]. to Kerr, June 3, 1922, FO/141/807(8013). Kerr agreed but was more optimistic about the outcome: 'The British officials are a stiffnecked ungrateful race, but I feel sure that they will change their tone when the effects of H.E.'s action become apparent.' A.C. K[err]., June 3, 1922 in ibid.
 2. R. Wellesley to J. Murray, June 8, 1922, FO/371/7734. Wellesley was the assistant to the Director-General of the Department of Public Security.
 3. Murray, Minute, 16.6.22 to Wellesley's letter, and, Balfour to Allenby, June 19, 1922, Tel. No. 172, FO/371/7734.
 4. Allenby to Balfour, June 8, 1922, Tel. No. 214, FO/371/7749. The proposed scheme of compensation drawn up by Judge Percival of Cairo is enclosed in Allenby to Balfour, June 18, 1922, Desp. No. 456, FO/371/7749.

Allenby saw two alternatives: imposing his scheme and losing the Tharwat Ministry; or, accepting the Prime Minister's assurances that individual cases would be dealt with generously as they arose. Despite the practical difficulties and the 'disappointment and discontent amongst British and foreign officials' if the latter course were adopted, Allenby accepted the proffered assurances with his own promise that British officials 'may rest assured that their interests will not suffer in my hands.'¹ Faced with a choice between Tharwat's survival and the interests of British officials, Allenby apparently believed that this was no choice at all.

The Foreign Office, now temporarily headed by Balfour, did not agree with Allenby's order of priorities and Lindsay noted: 'I'm not sure that a cabinet crisis in Egypt would be particularly disastrous, though I should prefer not to have one.'²

Even Balfour expressed fear that 'By yielding to Sarwat's desire to temporise we shall encourage the Egyptian government to think that a mere threat of resignation on their part is sufficient to induce His Majesty's Government to withdraw or at least postpone unpopular demands.'³ Despite some regret over the possibility of Tharwat's resignation, Allenby was urged, but not instructed to press the officials' claims to compensation.

Allenby, however, disregarded London's suggestions and informed Balfour that, given Tharwat's promise of generosity, he had agreed to the establishment of a small committee to deal with individual cases.⁴ Balfour was less than satisfied but had little choice and agreed that Allenby's arrangement 'is probably best that could be reached in present circumstances, but its least satisfactory feature is that it is unlikely to allay the apprehension of British officials.'⁵

The division between the Residency and the Foreign Office became even more apparent when the British press reported that nineteen foreign officials had been dismissed by the Egyptian government.⁶ Allenby explained the circumstances and rejected

1. Allenby to Balfour, June 8, 1922, Tel. No. 214, FO/371/7749.

2. R.C.L.[Lindsay]., Minute, June 12, 1922, to Balfour to Allenby, June 14, 1922, Tel. No. 171, FO/371/7749.

3. Balfour to Allenby, June 14, 1922, Tel. No. 171, FO/371/7749.

4. Allenby to Balfour, June 19, 1922, Tel. No. 223, FO/371/7749.

5. Balfour to Allenby, June 24, 1922, Tel. No. 176, FO/371/7749.

6. For example, see: Morning Post, June 28, 1922.

Balfour's request that pressure be applied openly on the Egyptian government. He sternly warned Balfour 'that working arrangement reached between myself and Prime Minister was confidential and that it is most important that it should remain so.'¹ Murray best described the difference between the Foreign Office and Residency approaches, a difference with a long history and deep roots:

Our policy is that it is important to allay the anxieties of British and incidentally of foreign officials who feel themselves 'in the air' and fear that they will not be supported by His Majesty's Government. If our object can be achieved without sacrificing Sarwat, whose fall would not advance it, so much the better.

Lord Allenby on the other hand appears to reverse the order of importance. That is to say, he is determined not to drive Sarwat to resignation over the question though subject to that limitation he will do the best he can for British and foreign officials.²

For the meantime Allenby's order of importance carried the day.

Allenby's difficulties, however, increased because of the growing number of attacks on British officers and officials in Egypt. On July 15, Colonel Pigott of the Army Pay Corps was shot in Cairo. Both the Residency and the Foreign Office were alarmed by what they saw as an organised 'campaign of political crime against British officers and officials' and Tharwat was warned that unless action was taken 'the matter will be regarded by His Majesty's Government as one of very great gravity.'³

Egyptian assurances and promises of compensation notwithstanding, the Residency took a grim view of the violence since Allenby's entire policy would be endangered by its continuation. Robert Furness quickly drew up a plan for the reorganisation of the Egyptian police and security agencies to enable them to deal more effectively with political crime. Responsibility for investigating such offences was transferred from the Cairo police and Parquet as well as from the British military authorities to the more reliable Public Security Department in the Ministry of Interior and its

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1. Allenby to Balfour, July 1, 1922, Tel. No. 233, FO/371/7749.
 2. Murray, Minute, 3.7.22 to Balfour to Allenby, July 6, 1922, Tel. No. 179, FO/371/7749.
 3. Allenby to Balfour, July 22, 1922, Desp. No. 585, FO/371/7735. For Foreign Office views, See: E.A.C[roWE]., July 17 to Allenby to Balfour, July 15, 1922, Tel. No. 248; and, Balfour to Allenby, July 18, 1922, Tel. No. 191, FO/371/7735.

Egyptian Director-General.¹

Still the situation continued to deteriorate because the violence was caused as much by political ferment as by ineffective police measures. At the end of July the Wafd openly renewed its political activities. Claiming that Zaghlul was seriously ill and had been mistreated in exile, the party's leadership condemned Britain and Tharwat and called on Egyptians, in a manifesto issued on July 24, 'to notify the civilized world by all means at your disposal, the expression of your anger and indignation...'² Allenby considered the Wafd manifesto inflammatory and a direct incitement to violence. He therefore ordered under martial law the arrest of the seven signatories. Once again, British authority was invoked to maintain public order.

The seven Wafd leaders were expeditiously tried and convicted. The death sentence was imposed and then commuted to penal servitude and a heavy fine. But public order had not been restored and pressure on Allenby increased. On the very day the Wafd leaders were sentenced, August 13, T.W. Brown of the Ministry of Agriculture was attacked. Curzon, having returned by now to the Foreign Office, was outraged and protested that

It seems that English are being shot at or assassinated simply because they are English and incident cannot fail greatly to increase the uneasiness of British officials in Egypt, whose faith in Sarwat's willingness and ability to safeguard their position will not be strengthened by the failure of the Government to prevent perpetration of these political crimes.³

Further arrests were ordered by Allenby, but matters were now getting out of hand. The British press protested the violence and the use of martial law to suppress it, the Egyptian government appeared to be dragging its feet on compensation to some of the victims, and Curzon called for the seizure of a revenue-earning branch

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1. R.F[urness]. to Allenby, July 16, 1922, FO/141/430(5500/14). Furness' suggestions were quickly implemented and then served as the basis, almost verbatim, for Allenby's long report to London. Allenby to Balfour, July 24, 1922, Desp. No. 594, FO/371/7736.
 2. Enclosure in Allenby to Balfour, July 29, 1922, Desp. No. 611, FO/371/7736.
 3. Curzon to Allenby, August 16, 1922, Tel. No. 209, FO/371/7736.

of the Egyptian administration to ensure adequate compensation.¹ Allenby, at this point, still resisted taking any step that would endanger the Tharwat ministry. He was convinced that nothing would be accomplished by forcing Tharwat out of office, especially since

We have made considerable progress towards a good understanding with Egypt and are gaining support of those whose opinions are really sound. They would come more into the open if sure of us but such action as is suggested in your telegram [No. 210] revenue seizure would give them impression that liberal policy declared by His Majesty's Government was insincere. No Egyptian could support it. It would put sharp and sudden check on progress of His Majesty's Government's policy in Egypt and might ruin any chance of our coming to friendly understanding.²

Murray drily observed that 'Lord Allenby's attitude is much what I expected what it would be...'³

Despite Allenby's persistent optimism, the most dangerous and uncontrollable element was the King and his intrigues against the Tharwat ministry. This was a result of the attempts of the Constitutional Commission to institute a limited monarchy in Egypt, and Fuad's intrigues to prevent this thereby threatening stability and encouraging the opposition parties.

However much the draft constitution was a compromise, its very conception constituted a serious limitation on the King's authority. Having come to power at the age of forty-eight, after years of political and actual exile,⁴ Fuad did not intend to ~~concede~~ his newly-acquired authority for the liberal principle of constitutionalism or for Tharwat's political benefit. The King did not hide his displeasure at the direction taken by the Commission and in August frankly told Allenby that it 'was behaving

1. For the attitudes of the press, see the following leading articles: 'Our Duty to Egypt,' Daily News, August 17, 1922; 'The Confusion in Egypt,' Manchester Guardian, August 26, 1922; 'The Burden of Egypt,' Times, August 14, 1922' and, 'The Situation in Egypt,' Westminster Gazette, August 19, 1922. For the differences over compensation to victims, see: Allenby to Curzon, August 14, 1922, Desp. No. 1097, FO/371/7736. For the suggested seizure of a source of revenue, see: Curzon to Allenby, August 16, 1922, Tel. No. 210, FO/371/7736.
2. Allenby to Curzon, August 18, 1922, Tel. No. 289, FO/371/7736.
3. Murray, Minute, 19.8.22, to Allenby to Curzon, August 18, 1922, Tel. No. 289, FO/371/7736.
4. For a sympathetic biography of Ahmad Fuad, see: Sirdar Ikbāl Ali Shah, Fuad, King of Egypt (London, 1936).

foolishly in selecting the most liberal articles they could find from the Constitutions of different countries, and preparing a Constitution far too advanced to be appropriate to Egypt; such a Constitution would prove unworkable, and could only be altered by events of revolutionary nature.'¹ Gerald Delaney, the long-time resident Reuters correspondent and frequent Residency informant, later reported similar comments:

The King is dissatisfied with the Constitution that has been drafted. He calls it a 'Bolshevistic Constitution' because it 'enables the people to choose a Ministry everyday.' He says it is not wise to give the people privileges before 'we know the sort of people who are going to be elected to Parliament.' 'But if the country is going to have a Bolshevistic Constitution' he says, 'then I am quite willing if I have the privilege of a Lenin. And if it is to be a Republican Constitution, then I am quite willing if I have the privileges of the President of the U.S.A.'²

In the meantime, as long as the constitution was not yet written and promulgated, Fuad had great prestige and much authority which he did not hesitate to exercise to undermine Tharwat's position before it became too late.³ Throughout August intrigues were carried out against Tharwat through palace officials such as the Grand Chamberlain Said Dhu-l-Fiqar Pasha. Messages were sent to Allenby and the King held audiences for the purpose of expressing his intense displeasure with the Prime Minister. The reasons were Tharwat's failure to notify Fuad about the arrest of the Wafd leadership, Tharwat's intention to suppress the pro-Wafd French language paper, Liberté, and, ostensibly, his inability to maintain public order. As a sign of dissatisfaction, the King refused to convene the Council of Ministers thereby hampering government activity. At one point Fuad was about to dismiss Tharwat because of a minor dispute and was barely dissuaded by Allenby who warned that such action, immediately after the arrest of the Wafd leadership, would dangerously enhance Wafd prestige. The conflict between the King and his Prime Minister continued for the rest of the summer and an open clash appeared inevitable.

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1. Allenby to Curzon, August 8, 1922, Desp. No. 640, FO/371/7736.
 2. G. Delaney to the Residency, 14/X/22 in FO/141/505(13584). For the Residency's views on Delaney's reliability as an informant, see: Kerr to H.E. [Allenby], May 2, 1922 in ibid.
 3. The account of Fuad's intrigues and his involvement of the British is based on Allenby to Curzon, August 8, 1922, Desp. No. 640, and Allenby to Curzon, August 21, 1922, Desp. No. 671, FO/371/7736.

The final stage in the life of the Tharwat ministry came in the late autumn. All the forces working against the ministry since it took office in March 1922 coalesced and led to its fall. This was made possible by Tharwat's lack of political support. The apparently well-founded charges of poor administration and favouritism made the regime still more unpopular. Even Allenby was forced to admit that

There is...ground for discontent with the Sarwat Ministry which seems to me to have ample justification. Partly with a view to increasing their personal popularity and obtaining political support, and partly, I suppose, owing to a prevalent reluctance to deny the demands of relatives and proteges, they have made a great number of highly arbitrary appointments and promotions. Though some of these may bring them political advantage and provide convenient channels for the exercise of power, there can be no doubt that in earning the thanks of one man they have increased the resentment of fifty, and, that, while they have become unpopular among their officials, they have not established at large the respect which accompanies a reputation for fairness.¹

The renewed debate over the Sudan clauses in the draft constitution further increased the ministry's vulnerability. In mid-October the draft was nearing completion and reports soon reached London, through the Times, that it would include the Constitutional Commission's earlier recommendations on the King's title and the Sudan. Curzon quickly protested and asked Allenby for clarification.² The High Commissioner, in the meantime, had entered into conversations with Tharwat and optimistically informed London that 'Sarwat has expressed himself as perfectly willing to omit former article [King's title] and suitable modifications or even omission of latter [status of Sudan] are under discussion.'³

Still the copy of the draft constitution that Allenby received unofficially in October confirmed Curzon's fears about the inclusion of clauses detrimental to British interests. The most contentious of these were Chapter I, sub-section I, which gave Fuad the title 'King of Egypt and the Sudan' and Article 8, section IV, describing the Sudan as an integral part of Egypt, although subject to a special

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1. Allenby to Curzon, October 15, 1922, Desp. No. 836, FO/371/7738.
 2. Curzon to Allenby, October 25, 1922, Tel. No. 272, FO/371/7738. The report upon which this telegram is based is Times, October 23, 1922. In view of earlier complaints about the lack of information from Cairo, it is interesting that Allenby had a copy of the draft constitution at least a week before the report appeared in the Times. See: Allenby to Curzon, May 5, 1923, Desp. No. 295, FO/371/8962.
 3. Allenby to Curzon, October 26, 1922, Tel. No. 367, FO/371/7738.

administration.¹ Yet Allenby still believed that the offending sections 'will be either omitted or satisfactorily amended before the Constitution is promulgated.'²

The King, meanwhile, carried on an almost overt campaign against the Tharwat ministry. After the failure to establish a Court or Conservative Party, Fuad directed his attention to intrigues with the Wafd. His agent apparently was the respected Tawfiq Nasim Pasha, a former Prime Minister and chief of the Royal Cabinet since April 1922.³ Rumours began to spread about the King's differences with Tharwat over the release of Zaghlul from detention, the delegation to Lausanne, and, most important, concessions over the Sudan clauses. Allenby could no longer accept Fuad's protestations that he was merely meeting as King of Egypt will all sectors of the public, including Wafd representatives, and not intriguing against the ministry:

I hear on all hands that emissaries of the Palace proclaim pro-Zaghlulist sentiments and are in close touch with Zaghlulist newspapers; in a recent issue of the Zaghlulist "Liberte", whose suspension by the Ministry was the chief immediate cause of a recent crisis, the photographs of the King and Mme Zaghlul appeared in conspicuous juxtaposition, and an evidently inspired article congratulated His Majesty on the courage which he must have required in order, for political reasons, to have concealed so long from the people his real opinions.⁴

Fuad used every opportunity to make his displeasure public knowledge. Weeks of open insults to the ministry left their mark. According to Allenby, it became 'the subject of public comment and contributed to undermine the prestige of the Government and to affect the nerves of the Prime Minister.'⁵ Even the moderates could not swim against the tide of popular opinion, especially on the Sudan issue. On October 31, Adli and his followers founded the Liberal Constitutionalist Party. Although they were firm in their adherence to the principle of constitutional government, Adli, in his inaugural address, felt the need to declare that

...any solution of the Sudan question leading to its separation from

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1. A French translation of Tharwat's draft constitution is in FO/371/7738.
 2. Allenby to Curzon, October 30, 1922, Desp. No. 867, FO/371/7738.
 3. For details of Nasim's activities, based on a report by the United States Minister in Cairo, December 1, 1922, see: Kedourie, *op.cit.*, pp.356-7. This is confirmed by Allenby to Curzon, October 15, 1922, Desp. No. 836, FO/371/7738.
 4. Allenby to Curzon, October 15, 1922, Desp. No. 836, FO/371/7738.
 5. Allenby to Curzon, May 5, 1923, Desp. No. 395, FO/371/8962.

Egypt, diminishing Egyptian rights in that territory, interfering with Egyptian suzerainty over it, or hindering Egypt from directing its [Egyptian] vital interests in the Sudan, would be a solution which not only no justice or friendliness, which should be the basis of the agreement, could justify, but which could never meet with the approval of the Egyptian people.¹

Such a position appeared to preclude an acceptable solution to the difficulties over the Sudan clauses. The general criticism of the new party as a British tool and then the murder of two of its leaders prevented any softening of its position and it began to openly criticise the Ministry although not as harshly as other parties did.

The pressure of events, particularly Fuad's activities, led Allenby to consider the possibility of intervening forcefully, a course previously avoided. Although still not fully convinced that Fuad would dare to openly frustrate British policy by rejecting the constitution, Allenby prepared for that contingency. At the beginning of November, the High Commissioner informed Curzon that if the King attempted to wreck the constitution, he would advise him against such action. Then, 'After giving that advice, I conceive that it will be necessary to insist on its being complied with.'² London responded favourably and for once the Foreign Office and Residency approaches coincided.³

Conditions, however, had become so bad and Tharwat's will to rule so weak, that no matter how forcefully the Residency intervened, the Ministry's condition was beyond repair. On November 26, Adli's Liberal Constitutionalist Party decided to withdraw all support from Tharwat if he gave in to Allenby on the Sudan clauses. Two days later Tharwat informed Allenby of his intention to resign on November 30. Tharwat's reasons were his strained relations with the King and the inadvisability of forcing Fuad to agree to a constitution which included concessions on the Sudan, because Tharwat would then be accused of giving away half of Egypt.⁴ Allenby did

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1. Enclosure in Allenby to Curzon, November 4, 1922, Desp. No. 882, FO/371/7739.
 2. Allenby to Curzon, November 7, 1922, Tel. No. 383, FO/371/7738. Allenby was being pressed by his staff to take such action. Furness, discussing the King's objections to a constitution in a long note, wrote 'that whatever degree of pressure may be necessary should be put upon the King to grant this Constitution.' R.F[urness]., 14/X/[1922], FO/141/430(5512) (Pt.3).
 3. Lindsay commented that 'Lord Allenby is exercising influence openly and wisely, & I agree that he must continue to do so.' R.C.L[indsay]., Nov., 8, Minute to Curzon to Allenby, November 7, 1922, Tel. No. 392, FO/371/7738.
 4. Allenby to Curzon, November 28, 1922, Tel. No. 418, FO/371/7739.

not try to dissuade the Prime Minister.

Only later did the Residency learn the immediate cause for Tharwat's hasty resignation. On November 28, the Minister of Waqfs [Religious Endowments] was informed that the King intended to pray at the al-Azhar Mosque, a Wafd stronghold, in the company of his Ministers on the following Friday. Since it was unusual for the King to pray in public, further enquiries were made and it soon became known that the Palace had organised a student demonstration for the occasion. In the course of the demonstration Tharwat and Sidqi Pasha were to be beaten with sticks as they left the Mosque. Upon hearing this, Tharwat immediately informed Allenby of his decision to resign which he did on November 30.¹

Officials at the Foreign Office were furious and went so far as to raise the possibility of the need 'to reconsider our whole attitude and policy towards Egypt, and...that it may be desirable if not essential definitely to solve the question of the Sudan by the annexation of that country.'² Allenby, however, had no intention of so easily abandoning the course he had embarked upon in February. Instead of an open break, he sharply informed Tawfiq Nasim, who was now charged with forming a new government, that he regretted the fall of the Ministry, that no change was contemplated in Britain's policy, that compensation for officials should proceed quickly, and, most important, that the British government 'would not acquiesce in delay in establishment of a parliamentary regime.'³ As for the King, Allenby proposed 'to throw upon him responsibility for situation created by fall of late Ministry and to express my displeasure at his manoeuvres.'⁴

1. Allenby to Curzon, May 5, 1923, Desp. No. 295, FO/371/8962. This is based on information obtained by Keown-Boyd at the Ministry of Interior. Keown-Boyd to Kerr, January 10, 1923, FO/141/484(278).
2. Murray, Minute, 29.11.22, to Allenby to Curzon, November 29, 1922, Tel. No. 419, FO/371/7739. This was also raised by Lindsay, R.C.L[indsay]., Minute, Nov. 29, to ibid. In the end, Crowe, acting for Curzon, chose to have Fuad questioned on his intentions and asked Allenby to make it clear 'that the whole attitude of His Majesty's Government towards Egypt and the Sudan will depend upon the nature of his replies to these questions.' Crowe to Allenby, November 29, 1922, Tel. No. 411, FO/371/7739.
3. Allenby to Curzon, December 1, 1922, Tel. No. 420, FO/371/7739.
4. Ibid.

Tawfiq Nasim and Fuad vs. Allenby (November 1922-February 1923)

After the fall of the Tharwat Ministry, the Residency viewed the developing political situation with concern. Given Fuad's approach, the appointment of Tawfiq Nasim as Prime Minister was seen as inevitable.

King Fuad's choice...was the logical sequel of the policy His Majesty had been pursuing with a view to provide himself with a Ministry that was willing to mould itself to his wishes and, by his association with the Zaghlulist party, to gain some measure of popular favour and to make his own position predominant.¹

As for Nasim, Allenby believed that he 'was the ready instrument, if not the actual inspiration, of this policy.'² Allenby did not question either the motives or the honesty of the new Prime Minister and credited him with serving what Nasim believed to be Egypt's best interests. Allenby also was convinced that Nasim did not have any real sympathy for the Wafd, but rather 'It seemed more probable that he conceived it to be in the interests of Egypt that the position of the Throne should be predominant, and that he shared the King's view as to the usefulness of Zaghlulism as a means to that end.'³

Still there was little doubt at the Residency that at this point strong ties between the Palace, the Ministry and the Wafd did indeed exist. Nasim's early activities appeared to confirm this assumption. His first public statement after taking office was made to the Editor of the Liberté, a newspaper linked to the Palace and the Wafd. Nasim was reported to have declared 'that the situation in regard to the exiles and interneers [Zaghlul and his associates] was inadmissible and intolerable.'⁴ The Residency believed that the Prime Minister's subsequent denial was only half-hearted and unconvincing. In addition, on a number of public occasions, notably during Fuad's visit to the al-Azhar Mosque, leading members of the Wafd were given great prominence.

Despite these developments and his openly expressed displeasure at recent events, the High Commissioner continued the policy of March 1922: The regularisation of Egypt's internal affairs. Here there seemed to be some progress.

Issues that were not directly or conspicuously related to the internal political situation appeared more amenable to resolution. Thus within days of Nasim's

1. Allenby to Curzon, May 5, 1923, Desp. No. 296, FO/371/8962.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

appointment, Allenby reported progress over compensation in such terms that Murray in London could comment that 'the compensation position question seems to be in a fair way to solution...'¹ In fact, acting on Amos' advice, Allenby now began to consider the question of how to limit the hiring of non-British foreign officials in the Egyptian civil service.²

At the same time, Allenby did not hesitate to take action in areas which he considered vital to the safeguarding of British interests and to the maintenance of the status quo. This could be seen in Allenby's intervention in the management of the Egyptian State Railways to ensure their efficiency because 'they form important part of imperial communications,'³ or his efforts to prevent the abolition of the post of Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, until now occupied by Keown-Boyd.⁴

When negotiations between the Residency and the Ministry touched upon more sensitive matters, progress was virtually impossible. The negotiations over a mutually acceptable programme for the Egyptian delegation to Lausanne is an example of where the Ministry was faced with the kind of political difficulties that prevented substantial movement. Allenby was aware of these difficulties and was not unsympathetic when he later commented that:

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1. Murray, Minute, 19.12.22, to Allenby to Curzon, December 9, 1922, Desp. No. 959, FO/371/8966. This optimism was also apparent in Allenby's reports to London. See: Allenby to Curzon, December 20, 1922, Desp. No. 989, FO/371/8966.
 2. Amos was particularly concerned. He wrote: 'Our principle object, it appears to me, is to avoid foreign officials being made the outposts of serious diplomatic rivalry with ourselves in this country.' Amos to First Secretary, December 28, 1922, FO/141/515(14382) (Pt. 1). As a result, Allenby urged London that only nationals of minor powers such as Belgium or Switzerland have access to important positions. Curzon rejected this because of the difficulties an only partially exclusionary policy would create. For details, see: Allenby to Curzon, January 3, 1923, Tel. No. 10, and, Curzon to Allenby, January 8, 1923, Tel. No. 13, FO/371/8966.
 3. This was based on the request by Blakeney, General Manager of the State Railways, that a supreme railway board with British representation be revived. Blakeney complained 'of obstructive and improper interference with his work on the part of Egyptian Under Secretary of State, with result that efficiency of Railways is now seriously threatened...' Allenby to Curzon, January 14, 1923, Tel. No. 23, FO/371/8959.
 4. When Keown-Boyd resigned as Director-General, the Egyptian government was reported to be planning to abolish the position. Allenby requested and obtained the Prime Minister's reluctant agreement neither to abolish nor to fill the position without reference to him. Allenby to Curzon, January 20, 1923, Tel. No. 33, FO/371/8966.

It should...be admitted that the position of the Egyptian Government at that time was one of some difficulty. Having come into office with avowedly Zaghlulist leanings, it was faced with a request to send an official delegation with a predetermined programme to Lausanne, where an unofficial Zaghlulist delegation was already installed, pledged to an extremist programme and fortified by the support of public opinion and a large body of the Egyptian press.¹

However, one of the most serious problems, affecting all aspects of Anglo-Egyptian relations as well as the position of the Residency in the British community, was the ongoing attacks on the British in Egypt. Sir Thomas Rapp, the British vice-consul in Cairo, noted in his unpublished Memoirs that

The continuing insecurity and the uncertainty of the future was causing increasing bitterness among the British community and criticism of the High Commissioner, Lord Allenby, was becoming more vocal. The gossip of clubs, bars and drawing rooms held him to have been entirely miscast for his actual role. His prestige as a soldier, it was argued, had availed him nothing with the Egyptians since he had failed to assert himself as the dominant personality they expected.²

On December 7, Professor W. Newby Robson of the Cairo Law School, was assassinated and his assailants escaped. Nasim was informed that as long as the attacks continued martial law would not be abolished. Allenby further insisted that an indemnity fixed by him be paid to the widow, British cavalry again patrol Cairo, demonstrations be suppressed more rigorously, police strength and mobility be increased, and, finally, Allenby raised the possibility of closing Zaghlul's house and the Law School because they had become centres of agitation. Nasim accepted all Allenby's demands but asked that the closing of Zaghlul's house not be insisted upon.³

Allenby, in his New Year's message, angrily condemned the 'campaign in [the] press and elsewhere which has sought by lies to poison [the] minds of Egyptians against Great Britain and to foster feelings of hatred against Englishmen...' He warned publicly that

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1. Allenby to Curzon, May 5, 1923, Desp. No. 296, FO/371/8962.
 2. Although this accurately reflected the opinions of many British officials in Egypt Rapp believed that 'Much of this criticism was unfair and ill informed.' Sir Thomas Rapp, Memoirs (ms), STAC, Rapp Papers, pp. 31-2.
 3. Allenby to Curzon, December 27, 1922, Tel. No. 445, FO/371/7740. Osborne, in Curzon's absence, replied that the reluctance to close Zaghlul's house, now believed to be a haven and centre for agitation, 'gives ground for apprehension that the latter [Nasim] or his sovereign King Fuad is seriously committed to the Zaghloulists.' Osborned favoured closure despite Nasim's plea. Osborne to Allenby, January 2, 1923, Desp. No. 7, FO/371/7740.

Murderers and those who make a profession of engendering hatred where there should be friendship not only bring suffering upon innocent victims, their families and friends but may also cause disorder to their own compatriots. They are the worst enemies of their country.¹

Additional measures, such as arming the British residents and increased police vigilance, were quickly adopted by the Ministry. Allenby, however, proposed that if the outrages continued further steps should be taken. In a despatch to London he urged that in this event a military governor be appointed for Cairo and Giza, Zaghlul's house be closed and public meetings banned, a fine be levied on the district in which the attack occurred, British forces carry out simultaneous arms searches in Cairo, suspects and unwilling witnesses be sent to Kharga Oasis, and a scheme of compensation for relatives be imposed.² The British were again being dragged into Egypt's internal affairs.

It was in this atmosphere that the struggle over the constitution took place. The context for the renewed conflict between the Residency and the Ministry was the altered relations between them. Allenby now did not feel constrained to give Nasim the same support he had given Tharwat. Nasim, on the other hand, took office as the King's man and all that that implied with respect to the King's authority under the constitution and the King's title to the Sudan. Fuad further complicated the situation by continuing his intrigues and repeatedly voicing dissatisfaction

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1. Allenby to Curzon, January 1, 1923, Tel. No. 2, FO/371/8958. Also reported in Times, January 2, 1923. The responses to the outrages was almost unanimously condemnatory. For example, see the leader, 'The Egyptian Murders,' Daily Chronicle, January 2, 1923. Even Zaghlul in exile was forced to condemn them: 'I deeply regret the recent outrages. I consider that they are against the interests of my country, which abhors the terrorist system, whatever its source ...and I associate myself with the recent protests made by my Wafd...members and other bodies and individuals of every class after hearing of the recent outrage...' Reported in the Times, January 15, 1923.
 2. Allenby also examined the idea of a fine of E.250,000 but rejected it because: (a) Egypt was not an enemy country; (b) the enquiries into the murders were largely carried out by Englishmen; and, (c) a fine imposed on the government would have little or no effect on the general public. Allenby to Curzon, February 3, 1923, Desp. No. 64, FO/371/8960.

with Allenby and his advisors.¹

Once again the occasion for the constitutional crisis was the Sudan. In the middle of January, Nasim proposed a comprehensive formula to end the disagreement that had begun in the last months of the Tharwat ministry. He suggested the following text for inclusion in the constitution:

The present constitution is applicable in all Egyptian territory with the exception of Soudan.

The provision contained in preceding paragraph must not be held to infringe rights of sovereignty or any other rights possessed by Egypt in Soudan.²

With respect to Fuad's title as King of Egypt and the Sudan, Nasim expressed the hope that the British would not press for its omission from the constitution.

At first Allenby was inclined to accept the proposed formula, but he was reluctant to agree to Fuad's title. Still, if British intransigence were to provoke an inopportune rupture with the Ministry 'it might be well...to consider propriety of acquiescing in adoption of title of "Sovereign of the Sudan" (which was borne by ex-Khedive) in addition to that of King of Egypt.'³ However, in the event dramatic action against the Ministry was contemplated, Allenby recommended informing Nasim that adoption of his text would result in its formal and public rejection by the British government. Furthermore, since such action by the Ministry would imply an Egyptian repudiation of the 1899 Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Convention, Britain should state that in future negotiations stipulations in that convention favouring Egypt might be disregarded.

In London, Murray and Lindsay believed that the Egyptian proposals went much too far and Curzon was astonished to know that Lord Allenby 'should even contemplate

1. Fuad was particularly bitter in his attacks on Allenby and those whom he thought were the High Commissioner's supporters, such as Amos and Selby. On December 11, 1922, he was reported to have told a professor at Cairo University that 'Sir Sheldon Amos, whom he [Fuad] regarded as a dangerous and untrustworthy person, was "leading Lord Allenby by the nose," whilst at the Foreign Office, Mr. Selby...was most unwisely supporting Amos, and, he feared, creating difficulties.' Then on January 21, the professor reported that Fuad had told him that 'It was...much to be regretted that Lord Allenby allowed himself to be guided by Sir Sheldon Amos and Mr. Kerr, intriguers both.' SIS Report No. Cx/4352, January 10, 1923, FO/371/8967, and SIS Report No. Cx/4352, January 24, 1923 in Ibid.
2. Allenby to Curzon, January 14, 1923, Tel. No. 24, FO/371/8959.
3. Ibid.

sanctioning the title "Sovereign of the Soudan" - which is quite inadmissible.¹ Consequently, Curzon, with the approval of Bonar Law, informed Allenby that Nasim's text was unacceptable because it would give rise to apprehensions in the Sudan and 'It will be regarded generally as indicative that His Majesty's Government are unable to resist Egyptian pretensions in that country...'² Instead Curzon proposed that two alternatives be presented to Nasim: either the inclusion in the constitution of the following formulae -

The King shall have the title King of Egypt
 This provision is without prejudice to any rights which His Majesty may enjoy in the Sudan.
 The present constitution is applicable to the Kingdom of Egypt.
 This provision is without prejudice to any rights possessed by Egypt in the Sudan,³

or, failing that, to present and then publish a note to the Egyptian government condemning the constitution as an attempt to nullify the 1899 Convention and the declaration of February 1922 and warning that

...in the event of the Egyptian Government taking any action which in the opinion of His Majesty's Government is inconsistent with the status quo in the Sudan His Majesty's Government will consider themselves free to disregard said convention of 1899 and to resume complete liberty of action in regard to that country.⁴

Thus the Egyptian government would be faced with the choice of either accepting the British version of the status quo in the Sudan or jeopardising the 1899 Convention for titles and formulae that at present would be meaningless without British agreement.

Meanwhile the Residency was coming quickly to the conclusion that Fuad, 'playing high for power and [with] hopes to attain his object through Tawfiq Nessim, backed by

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1. C[urzon].., Minute, 16.1.23, to ibid. Also, see: Murray and R.C.L[indsay].., Minutes, 15.1.23 and Jan. 15, to ibid. Other reactions were equally negative. For example, Lord Stamfordham, the King's Secretary, wrote that 'King George hopes that whatever be the development of our policy in Egypt we shall never give up the Sudan.' Stamfordham to Crowe, January 15, 1923, FO/371/8959. Curzon finally vetoed any consideration of this title since the argument for it 'cannot be considered as having any serious relevancy to present situation...' Curzon to Allenby, January 19, 1923, Tel. No. 14, FO/371/8959.
 2. Curzon to Allenby, January 18, 1923, Tel. No. 24, FO/371/8959.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.

the Zaghlulists,' was the major obstacle to a satisfactory solution. The view held by a number of Allenby's advisors was that 'For the moment progress is held up owing to the intrigue of the King and the machinations of the Zaghlulist party...' and that 'Beyond his power as a maintainer of order Nessim is...at the moment politically useless to us unless he receives a "mot d'ordre" from the King to be conciliatory.'¹ A firm stand on the Sudan, therefore, now appeared attractive. If the Ministry could be forced through the King to accede to British demands, it would earn Residency support as well as become unpopular with the Wafd. In the event of failure, Adli was always in the wings.

The Residency was further concerned by the Prime Minister's hesitation over promulgating an act of indemnity simultaneously with the constitution. Ostensibly Nasim was concerned that promulgating both at the same time would detract from the good political effect of a constitution. In addition, he was hesitant about promulgating an indemnity law until the end of martial law was in sight or, at least, until there was some significant act of amnesty by the British towards Egyptians imprisoned for political offences. Nasim therefore proposed the immediate promulgation of the constitution without reference to the act of indemnity, but that the latter should be promulgated before the constitution came into effect.

Allenby, however, was not convinced by Nasim's assurance that an act of indemnity would not be revised by a future parliament because it would be protected from parliamentary interference by the constitutional guarantee of the sanctity of international agreements. Although this position was correct legally, Allenby believed that 'as time goes on Ministry will feel increasing rather than diminished hesitation in committing themselves to an indemnity law without Parliament sanction.'²

The general drift in all areas of the constitution was becoming worrisome. Throughout Nasim's term in office there were signs that amendments had been introduced greatly increasing the King's authority. According to reports, the clause stating that the nation was the source of authority was to be omitted; the King would have wide power in the distribution of honours; the King could dissolve the entire parliament and not merely the Chamber of Deputies; the King would control religious endowments; he could issue decree laws even while parliament was in session; and,

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1. OMT[weedy] to Kerr, January 21, 1923, FO/141/484(278). Furness in a minute of the same date concurred, ibid.
 2. Allenby to Curzon, January 23, 1923, FO/371/8959.

there now would be much larger number of appointed Senators than before.¹

Allenby was extremely disturbed by these developments and on a later date described Fuad's behaviour and intentions in grim terms:

Starting with double aim of ridding himself of a disagreeable ministry and arrogating power to himself, he has been obliged to put subservient ministry in office, and in default of other support to cajole Zaghloulists. They support him in hope that they will obtain return of Zaghloul, which he presumably does not want and which he foresees that we shall prevent, and he takes the opportunity of increasing his own power. Thus, while he has been compelled to show eagerness about constitution in order to keep public opinion quiet and has focused attention on Sudan articles, he has changed draft in direction of giving more power to senate and creating influence by the Crown over that body. He has also revised statutes of all the Egyptian orders so as to place them in his personal grant and thus prepare for restoring the pernicious regime of personal bribery associated with Abbas Hilmi [the ex-Khedive]...²

Therefore, because of the direction of events and the Foreign Office's refusal to accept Tawfiq Nasim's formula, Allenby informed London that, in order to prevent the promulgation of the present draft of the constitution, it would be necessary to address a far sharper rebuke to the Egyptian ministry than previously considered. Consequently, Allenby informed Nasim only of the Foreign Office proposals for the amended Sudan clauses, but did not tell him of the contents of the note that would be delivered if the present draft was promulgated.

On January 24, Nasim handed Allenby an unsigned note repeating Egypt's position on this question.³ The following evening Allenby warned Nasim that if the unsigned note constituted an expression of Egyptian intentions 'His Majesty's Government would regard it as unfriendly act and as attempt not only to denounce 1899 convention but also to repudiate February declaration and that consequently such a policy would

1. For details, see: Kedourie, op.cit., p.358ff.
2. Allenby to Curzon, January 25, 1923, Tel. No. 41, FO/371/8959. The Residency believed that the eminence grise behind Fuad was Nasha'at Bey who was to play an important part in Palace intrigues in coming years: 'It is now quite certain that the greater part of our immediate troubles with the King as well as those that occurred during the Sarwat Ministry are due to Nashat Bey. This young man ...has now a complete ascendancy over the King. It was he who first started the understanding between the Palace and the Zaghlulists....He has caused much dis-sention [sic] in the Palace itself and is well hated by Zulficar Pasha and Nessim Pasha.' Keown Boyd to Kerr, February 11, 1923, FO/141/584(13062), [this entire file deals with Nasha'at's activities over the years].
3. The text of this note is in Allenby to Curzon, January 25, 1923, Tel. No. 40, FO/371/8959.

be far-reaching.'¹ Allenby then asked the Foreign Office for authority to give Fuad a note stating that Britain would not recognise the assumption of the title 'King of Egypt and the Sudan', that foreign governments would be so informed, and that such an act would be considered discourteous and unfriendly to the British leaving them free to reconsider policy with regard to the 1899 convention and the 1922 declaration. In addition, Allenby recommended that the note to Fuad explicitly and forcefully state that

...the King will forfeit amity of His Majesty's Government who have for some time past viewed with disquietude His Majesty's sustained efforts to arrogate to himself autocratic powers and bearing in mind evils of personal regime which brought about their intervention in Egypt in 1882, they will henceforth closely scrutinize His Majesty's personal acts.²

Fuad could not mistake the ominous and thinly veiled allusions to the British invasion of 1882 or to the deposition of the ex-Khedive because of his attitude towards Britain.

Allenby then decided that he would not permit Fuad to extricate himself from his difficulties by verbal assurances which he could then disregard in the future. He, therefore, recommended that the King should be given a clear choice between two documents. If the King decided to promulgate the constitution as it now stood, Allenby's proposed rebuke would be presented and published. If, on the other hand, the King acquiesced to the British demands, he should be forced to signify his agreement by signing a statement which gave the British view of the conflict and ended in total surrender to the British demands:

His Majesty [the King of Egypt]...has authorised His Excellency the High Commissioner to transmit communication to His Britannic Majesty's Government in which His Majesty states that having taken representation of British Government into most serious consideration and being no less desirous than is British Government that establishment of constitutional institutions in Egypt should be accomplished without controversy, His Majesty acquiesces in views of His Britannic Majesty's Government.³

To further make his threat credible, Allenby called for a display of naval and marine force at Alexandria and Port Said. This was authorised by London on January 30, and Allenby's two texts were approved with only minor revisions.⁴

1. Allenby to Curzon, January 25, 1923, Tel. No. 39, FO/371/8959.

2. Ibid.

3. Allenby to Curzon, January 26, 1923, Tel. No. 43, FO/371/8959.

4. Curzon to Allenby, January 30, 1923, Tel. No. 38, FO/371/8959.

The climax of the crisis began on the afternoon of Friday, February 2.¹ Allenby presented the King with the text of the two notes and warned him that he had until seven that evening to decide upon a course of action. Fuad pleaded for more time to meet with his Ministers. The deadline was extended until noon, Saturday, because it would be difficult to assemble the Ministry on a Friday. While Allenby was at the Palace, a member of the Residency unofficially presented the relevant portions of the two notes and Allenby's covering note to Nasim.

At seven, that same evening, Nasim called at the Residency and proposed compromise formulae for the Sudan clauses:

Le titre^{que} portera le Roi d'Egypte sera établi après que les delegations autorisées auront fixé le statut définitif du Soudan.

La présente Constitution est applicable au Royaume d'Egypte.

Cette disposition ne porte aucune atteinte aux droits qu'a l'Egypte au Soudan.²

Allenby noted that the last formula was in effect a translation of Curzon's earlier text and he promised to submit the new proposals to London. He added, however, that he expected a favourable reply from Fuad before doing so.

The next morning, Saturday, February 3, Nasim returned to the Residency at ten and informed Allenby that the Ministry had accepted the formulae discussed the previous evening, but that the King had suggested that Mahmud Fakhri Pasha, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, sign the note of surrender. Allenby refused to let Fuad thus dissociate himself from the crisis. Then, at noon, Allenby's deadline to the King, Robert Rolo, one of Fuad's confidants, came to the Residency to make the same request on behalf of the King. When Allenby again refused, Rolo asked for more time in order to convince Fuad to sign the document. The deadline was extended until one-thirty that afternoon. At about that time Mahmud Fakhri telephoned to request an appointment for himself and Nasim during the course of the day. Allenby angrily refused this since it would mean further delay and he told Fakhri that he must assume that Fuad was still reluctant to sign. Allenby therefore asked for a time at which the King would be prepared to receive another visit from him.

A half an hour later, Saïd Dhu-l-Fiqar Pasha, the King's Grand Chamberlain,

1. This account of the events of February 2-3 is based on a long despatch summarising the climax of the conflict and including the relevant documents. Allenby to Curzon, February 11, 1923, Desp. No. 83, FO/371/9060.

2. Ibid.

telephoned Allenby to make a last appeal that either Nasim or Fakhri be permitted to sign instead of Fuad. Allenby replied shortly that 'I had already allowed His Majesty a long respite, and that there were limits to my patience; if he[Fuad] persisted in withholding his reply I should be obliged, to my regret, to inform...[Curzon] that he was unwilling to accede to the wishes of His Majesty's Government.'¹ Dhu-l-Fiqar Pasha then explained that the King was afraid that if he signed, the act would be unconstitutional. Allenby, however, was totally unconcerned with this problem and demanded an immediate decision. A short while later, Dhu-l-Fiqar telephoned from the Palace to tell Allenby that Fuad would sign the note and it would be delivered to Allenby at seven in the evening.

When the note was delivered as promised, Allenby discovered that there had been a number of changes in the text. The most important was the redrafting of the final sentence and the deletion of the significant phrase '...accepte les vues du Gouvernement de Sa Majeste britannique.'² Allenby refused to accept the altered version and corrected it by hand. He then demanded from Dhu-l-Fiqar that the note be recopied and signed by Fuad without delay.

The charade ended at nine when the Grand Chamberlain returned to the Residency with two documents. One was the corrected note signed by Fuad and the other was a letter from the Ministers agreeing to the inclusion of the new Sudan articles in the constitution. On receipt of these, Allenby cabled London urging that the new formulae be accepted and he received approval on February 6³ ending temporarily the crisis over the Sudan.

The cost of the crisis for Fuad was high. Not only was he humiliated by the manner in which he had to relinquish his pretensions, but the political alliances so carefully nurtured during Nasim's ministry now began to crumble. After the Palace and the Ministry were forced to capitulate over the Sudan, Nasim's resignation and its eventual acceptance were inevitable. The Ministry had taken office with the undeclared aim of assuring Fuad's position and authority by coming to an understanding with the more popular political factions in Egypt. The conflict over the Sudan resulted in part from a desire to gain popularity in these quarters. Now that this had ended in failure, the Ministry could no longer serve the King's aims effectively and Nasim feared a public outcry over his capitulation. On February 5, the Prime Minister

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Curzon to Allenby, February 6, 1923, Tel. No. 44, FO/371/8959.

therefore wrote Fuad that 'It [Ministry] has...tendered its resignation before inscribing in the Constitution the words upon which, under the pressure of events, it had come to agreement with Your Majesty with a view to preserving the Throne and the rights of the Country at a most critical moment.'¹ Fuad reluctantly accepted the Ministry's resignation five days later.

As for Allenby, although Fuad's intrigues had been thwarted and the status quo preserved, the British appeared no closer to their aim of a constitution than before. Instead events had pushed the Residency even further in the direction of open intervention in Egypt's internal affairs, a situation which was to have ended with the declaration of February 1922.

Impasse and Solution (February-July 1923)

Recent events forced Allenby to continue playing an active role in Egyptian affairs. During the interview in which Fuad was told to accept Nasim's resignation, the Residency expressed pointed interest in the formation and character of a new ministry. Through the good offices of Rolo, Fuad was informed that 'Y.E. [Allenby] was willing to help H.M. [Fuad] in the formation of a new Cabinet, on the composition of which Y.E. [Allenby] would like to be consulted.'²

The period immediately following Nasim's resignation was occupied, therefore, by negotiations aimed at achieving this end. Figures such as Wahba, Rushdi, Mazlum, Muhammad Said and, eventually, Adli Pasha were consulted by Fuad. When most candidates were rejected by the Residency because they were believed to be too amenable to Palace and/or Wafd influence, Allenby turned to the ever-present Adli.

Only weeks before Allenby had curtly dismissed Adli because 'he [Allenby] had little faith in him as a fighter, or a leader of a party. In an emergency he considered him

1. Situation Report, PSD, February 1-10, 1923, in Allenby to Curzon, February 17, 1923, Desp. No. 90, FO/371/8973. The Residency was involved in the acceptance of the resignation. Clark-Kerr reported to Allenby that 'I saw Mr. Rolo today and asked him to take on your behalf a message to the King to the effect that you did not think that there was anything to be gained by keeping Tewfik Nessim Ministry in office...' ACK[err] to H.E., February 6, 1923, FO/141/627(724) (Pt.II).
2. ACK[err] to H.E., February 6, 1923, FO/141/627(724) (Pt.II). It later transpired that Allenby was not fully consulted but approved the introduction of Rolo after the fact. ACK, 15/2/23, Minute, to ibid.

hopeless.'¹ Now, however, in order to prevent further intrigues by Fuad, the Residency advised the King that Adli was the most suitable candidate. Still Allenby viewed an Adli ministry in an almost purely negative light. He was later to write that 'The formation of a Government under Adly Pasha seemed to offer fewer disadvantages than any other.'² But since secret talks with Adli indicated that he was amenable to political compromise with the British, he was invited to form a ministry on February 19.³

With characteristic caution, some might say timidity, Adli did not accept Fuad's mandate immediately. Instead he tested public opinion to determine the Wafd's response and the sincerity of Fuad's promise of co-operation. Attacks in the Wafd and Palace-influenced press made Adli even more cautious. As a result, Allenby sharply warned Fuad 'that I should expect to see an immediate change of tone in the newspapers in question.'⁴ The attacks quickly abated despite Fuad's protestations of innocence and, on March 1, Adli was again invited to form a ministry.

Once again Adli tested public opinion. He issued a statement outlining the policies his party would support if adopted by a new ministry. These were: removal of British restrictions on Egyptian freedom of action over the Sudan clauses; abolition of martial law; and, the release of Zaghlul and other political internees in the Seychelles or in Egypt.⁵ Secretly, Adli tried to reassure Allenby that he would make satisfactory compromises on outstanding issues. While Allenby favoured this solution to the present impasse, London took a rather dim view of Adli's promises as 'assurances which he may be unable to implement...'⁶

Nevertheless, Allenby continued to be optimistic over prospects for a workable ministry. The one factor beyond his control, however, was the continued campaign of violence and Adli's response to it. On February 7, a British railway official was attacked. This was followed by stringent military and punitive measures against the quarter in which the attack occurred. Further disturbances took place and by the end

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1. Minutes of a Meeting Held at the Residency on January 18, 1923, FO/141/484(278).
 2. Allenby to Curzon, July 19, 1923, Desp. No. 488, FO/371/8962.
 3. Allenby to Curzon, February 19, 1923, Tel. No. 71, FO/371/8960.
 4. The papers referred to were La Liberté and al-Balagh. Allenby to Curzon, July 19, 1923, Desp. No. 488, FO/371/8962.
 5. Allenby to Curzon, March 1, 1923, Tel. No. 83, FO/371/8960.
 6. Curzon to Allenby, March 3, 1923, Tel. No. 62, FO/371/8960.

of February Zaghlul's house was closed. On March 1 five British soldiers and three Egyptians were injured near the Cairo railway station. Five days later, one Egyptian was killed and three British soldiers and one Egyptian were injured in a bomb attack.¹ The campaign of violence was increasing in tempo and the harsh British countermeasures left their mark in Cairo and in London.

One immediate result was that Adli's resolve weakened and Allenby had to inform London that 'Adly has refused definitely to accept office recognizing martial law cannot now be suspended.'² The Foreign Office was thoroughly dismayed by the deterioration of the situation in Egypt. All the fears and suspicions so evident in the months preceding the February declaration re-appeared. Allenby's advice, policies and competence were seriously questioned. After conversations with British members of the Egyptian civil service, Murray gloomily noted the failure of Allenby's approach: '...it looks as if the policy of conciliation and disentanglement initiated a year ago has ended, or will shortly end, in Lord Allenby having to attempt to run the country by undisguised coercion.'³ Crowe was even sharper in his comments: '...I fear we do not get proper advice on this point [of what policy to adopt] from the one quarter where we should naturally look for it, and that is Lord Allenby.'⁴ Curzon expressed open hostility to Allenby and implicitly questioned his ability to carry out his functions: '...I cannot help thinking that with the present High Commissioner we shall not make much progress.'⁵ These comments were similar in tone and content to those made during the disagreements over policy in 1919 and 1921/22. Curzon now sharply cabled Allenby that

...we are drifting into a position similar to that which existed

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1. For statistics of casualties, trials, executions and other sentences resulting from political crimes of violence, see: FO/141/583(9307). Also see, Thomas Russell, A List of the Political Crimes Which Took Place Between the Years 1910 and 1946, STAC, Russell Papers. Russell gives the following breakdown of political murders, attempted murders and known conspiracies to commit murder: 1919-22; 1920-17; 1921-3; 1922-22 (8 successful); 1923-9; and, 1924-1. Although Russell's figures show a decline in 1923 from the 1922 totals, this is somewhat misleading. The campaign of violence which reached a peak around February-March 1923, began in the second half of 1922. It would, therefore, be a more accurate reflection of the situation if figures were given for September 1922 to September 1923 rather than for the calendar year.
 2. Allenby to Curzon, March 5, 1923, Tel. No. 86, FO/371/8960.
 3. Murray, Memorandum, March 6, 1923, FO/371/8960.
 4. E.A.C[roWE]., Minute, March 6, to ibid.
 5. C[urzon]., Minute, 6/3, to ibid.

before your visit of last year, with the difference that while British government and British troops are still compelled to exert an influence which we then desired to diminish, the collapse of Egyptian administration makes this task one of enhanced difficulty and danger.¹

He then called on Allenby either to return to London for consultations or, failing that, to render by cable a full accounting of the situation.

Allenby politely declined to return to London because he feared that this would cause a sensation in Egypt leading to speculation about a change in British policy. Instead, he tried to reassure Curzon that the outrages seemed worse than they really were and he urged that the British government maintain an 'attitude of imperturbability'.² In private, Allenby did not hesitate to express his general irritation with the 'panicky FO'³ and a clash between the British in Cairo and in London seemed possible, if not probable.

Since Allenby refused to return to London, a long cable was sent to Cairo asking for his response to twenty questions. These ranged from the possibility of a new ministry to the reaction in Egypt if Fuad were forced to abdicate.⁴ The entire issue, however, became academic when a day later, on March 14, Yahya Ibrahim Pasha, Minister of Education in the Nasim ministry, was invited by Fuad to form a neutral Ministry of Affairs that would not deal with political questions.

Although the new Prime Minister was politically an unknown quantity and was widely believed to be weak and unsuited for his position, Allenby immediately agreed to his forming a ministry. Despite some misgivings, particularly over the fact that most of the new ministers seemed to have been hand-picked by Fuad, Allenby was impressed by Yahya Ibrahim's honesty and the sincerity of his desire to cooperate with the

1. Curzon to Allenby, March 8, 1923, Tel. No. 65, FO/371/8960.
2. Allenby to Curzon, March 10, 1923, Tel. No. 93, FO/371/8960.
3. One example of Allenby's growing irritation with the Foreign Office was his response to the Foreign Office request that he cancel a visit to Transjordan. As a result he wrote Viscount Samuel, the High Commissioner in Palestine: 'I am bitterly disappointed that I can't have the pleasure of coming to you; and I am amazed with the F.O. for putting their fingers, again, into my pie.

Things here are not as bad as they appear in the press, and I have capable men to leave in charge; and the F.O. have no business to butt in, like this.' Allenby to Samuel, 8 March, 1923, SAI, Samuel Papers, 100/I.

4. Curzon to Allenby, March 13, 1923, Tel. No. 68, FO/371/8960. For Allenby's replies, see Allenby to Curzon, March 31, Tel. No. 111, FO/371/8961.

Residency.¹

Beyond this, the reaction to the Prime Minister ranged from mild hopefulness to curt dismissal. Allenby, himself, was generally optimistic about any ministry that enjoyed his support and bore the Residency's imprimatur. He, therefore, was pleased that Yahya Ibrahim's 'attitude in regard to outstanding questions appears generally satisfactory.'² Furness noted in this respect that

The present Ministry has, at any rate for the time being, the support of H.E. and no doubt of the Palace. It is, I think, not a bad Ministry of its class, but the class is second or third, and it must largely depend on that support.³

The Foreign Office, on the other hand, remained unconvinced about prospects for the future and all Lindsay could say about the new ministry was: 'it's a poor lot.'⁴ The new government, perhaps, could best be described as a relatively powerless body that would mediate between the opposing interests of the Residency and the Palace thereby preventing a bitter and public conflict between Allenby and Fuad.

From the start the Residency made it clear to Yahya that the activities of the ministry even in purely administrative affairs would be closely watched. Furness recommended that 'for safety's sake, it is desirable that the Ministry should continue to feel that we are giving them friendly attention.'⁵ Therefore, Kerr, with Allenby's concurrence, saw Yahya on March 22 and informed him of the nature and extent of Residency interest in Egyptian affairs.

Yahya's response satisfied the Residency. In addition, the new Prime Minister informed Allenby during their first meeting that 'he would not content himself with the mere administration of affairs, but would endeavour to proceed with the promulgation of the Constitution, the Electoral Law and the Indemnity Bill.'⁶ Yahya confirmed

1. Allenby to Curzon, July 19, 1923, Desp. No. 492, FO/371/8962.
2. Allenby to Curzon, March 14, 1923, Tel. No. 95, FO/371/8960.
3. R.F[Furness]., to Kerr, Minute, 17/3(23), FO/141/484(284). Allenby commented in a letter to Samuel that 'Our new Ministry is a tender plant; promising, but needs nursing.' Allenby to Samuel, March 22, 1923, SAI, Samuel Papers, 100/I. Yahya was aware of his position and told a Times correspondent on March 25 that he 'was confident of the support of his King and the collaboration of the High Commissioner, which in the present circumstances was essential to the successful execution of what the Cabinet had before them.' Times, March 26, 1923.
4. R.C.L[Lindsay]., Minute, March 16, to Allenby to Curzon, March 16, 1923, Tel. No. 96, FO/371/8961.
5. R.F[Furness]., to Kerr, 17/3(23), FO/141/484.
6. Allenby to Curzon, July 19, 1923, Desp. No. 492, FO/371/8962.

this publicly in an interview with the Times correspondent and added that '...he did not desire to retain office and he consented to fill the breach in order to assist his country in a critical period.'¹

The first significant event after Yahya took office was Zaghlul's release from detention in Gibraltar. Some writers have assumed that Zaghlul was freed at Yahya's request or in collusion with the new ministry.² The evidence, however, indicates that the deterioration of Zaghlul's health and pressure on the Foreign Office and the Residency were primarily responsible for Zaghlul's release at the first favourable moment.

Originally Zaghlul and his associates were transported from Aden to the Seychelles on February 28, 1922. Within a few months the deportees began to complain bitterly about the conditions of detention and the hazard to their health. With respect to Zaghlul, they claimed in June 1922 that 'It is no longer for him, a question of exile but one of life and death.'³ While this claim appears somewhat exaggerated, the Chief Medical Officer in the Seychelles reported that there were grounds for concern about Zaghlul's health.⁴ Allenby was worried about the impact Zaghlul's death would have in Egypt, if its cause could be tied to his detention in the Seychelles. Balfour, acting Foreign Secretary during Curzon's illness, shared Allenby's fears and the Foreign Office sought Colonial Office permission to move Zaghlul to Gibraltar.⁵ Zaghlul's deteriorating health and growing concern in and out of the British Parliament made his transfer a certainty.⁶ Amidst much secrecy, Zaghlul arrived in Gibraltar on September 2, 1922.

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1. Times, March 26, 1923.
 2. Kedourie maintains that there is evidence of collusion and that Yahya sought and received Allenby's consent for Zaghlul's release during their first interview. See, Kedourie, op.cit., p.361.
 3. Memorial from deportees to B.P. Petrides, Administrator, Seychelles, June 9, 1922, in Allenby to Balfour, July 29, 1922, Desp. No. 608, FO/371/7736.
 4. This report was cabled to Allenby on July 3. Allenby to Balfour, July 5, 1922, Tel. No. 236, FO/371/7734.
 5. For Allenby's reaction, see: Allenby to Balfour, July 5, 1922, Tel. No. 237; for London's agreement, see: Minutes by Murray, 6.7.22 and Oliphant to Colonial Office, July 7, 1922, FO/371/7734.
 6. For the decision to transfer Zaghlul, see: Balfour to Allenby, July 17, 1922, Tel. No. 189; and, Allenby to Balfour, July 19, 1922, Tel. No. 253, FO/371/7735. At the time of the transfer there were requests from Milner for Zaghlul's transfer on humanitarian grounds. Milner to Balfour, July 27, 1922, FO/371/7736 and Balfour to Milner, August 1, 1922, BLO, Milner Papers, Box 164.

The pressure for Zaghlul's release did not abate in Egypt or in England.¹ While there was some improvement in his health, the Medical Officer in Gibraltar reported that it 'was no more than the change from a critical condition to a precarious condition. He is like a man on the edge of a precipice....'² By January 1923, even before the fall of Nasim's ministry, there was general agreement in Cairo that Zaghlul must be released 'on humanitarian grounds and on grounds of expediency', but that for obvious political reasons he should not be permitted to return to Egypt immediately.³ Because of the Governor of Gibraltar's growing concern, the Foreign Office also moved in the direction of release which Allenby welcomed if Zaghlul could be barred from Egypt.⁴ Allenby gave his approval on March 24 with the condition that secrecy be maintained to avoid a rush in Egypt to claim credit for the release.

The response in Egypt to the announcement of Zaghlul's release on March 30 was, according to Allenby, one of 'calm satisfaction', a sentiment also expressed by the British press.⁵ Most important, as far as political stability was concerned, 'while

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1. There were ongoing calls for Zaghlul's release such as the leader that appeared in the Manchester Guardian, September 27, 1922.
 2. This was a report by J.A.S. Lochhead, Medical Officer in Gibraltar in Orr, Acting Governor of Gibraltar, to Allenby, December 11, 1922, FO/371/8963. Still there was resistance in London to Zaghlul's release. On January 2, 1923, Murray noted that because of Zaghlul's health 'there would be less danger in allowing him to leave Gibraltar and reside wherever he liked in Europe.' But Curzon, in turn, minuted on January 5: 'Please leave well alone. There is no need for him to be moved elsewhere in view of the fact that Gibraltar suits him so well.' FO/371/8963.
 3. A.C.K[err], to Allenby, January 14, 1923, FO/141/484(278). This memorandum contains a summary of a conversation between Kerr, Furness, Keown-Boyd and Amos in which all agreed that Zaghlul must be released at the first possible opportunity. This was confirmed at a meeting in the Residency on January 18 with Allenby, Scott, Dowson, Amos, Kerr, Keown-Boyd, Furness and Patrick present. Minutes of a Meeting Held at the Residency on January 18, 1923 and Amos to the First Secretary, January 19, 1923, FO/141/484(278).
 4. On March 10, Smith-Dorrien, Governor of Gibraltar, reported that Zaghlul's health required his release. Smith-Dorrien to Duke of Devonshire, March 10, 1923, FO/371/8964. In the meantime pressure continued in the press, see: Westminster Gazette, March 10, 1923 and Manchester Guardian, March 21, 1923; and, for pressure in Parliament, see Macdonald's question to McNeill, March 16, 1923, FO/371/8964. On March 29, a letter calling for Zaghlul's release and signed by 97 Members of Parliament appeared in the Times, March 29, 1923. However, later claims that this influenced the decision to release Zaghlul are untrue, since the decision had been made five days earlier.
 5. Allenby to Curzon, April 14, 1923, Desp. No. 238, FO/371/8965. For the reaction of the British press, see: Manchester Guardian, April 2, 1923; Daily Herald, April 2, 1923; Sunday Times, April 1, 1923.

in effect he had not been consulted in the matter[of Zaghlul's release], Yehia Pasha was able to draw considerable political advantage from it.¹ Thus, although Yahya did not have a major role in this episode, there can be little doubt that Zaghlul's release only two weeks after the formation of a new ministry strengthened the position of the Prime Minister enabling him to act on issues such as the constitution and an electoral law.

During the weeks that followed, Allenby took an active and open part in attempting to restore the draft constitution to the pre-Nasim version. He had two major reasons for this approach:

Firstly, I did not consider that it was in keeping with the spirit of the policy of His Majesty's Government, as implied by the Declaration of the 28th February, that King Fuad should be allowed to arrogate undue prerogatives to himself. Secondly, in view of the manner in which public opinion had expressed itself, I apprehended that, in the event of the King carrying his point, the Constitution would be promulgated in a form which would not only make him and his Ministry very unpopular, but would also in all probability give rise to a constitutional struggle between the King and the people, and also possibly to an anti-monarchist movement.²

Although Allenby's assumptions have been questioned,³ this attitude nevertheless led to a continuous daily struggle over the constitution between the Palace and the Residency, with Yahya Ibrahim in the middle. The High Commissioner later wrote that

The position of the Prime Minister in this matter was one of some embarrassment. He was genuinely desirous of carrying out his declared intention to promulgate a democratic constitution, and in the realisation of this end he was greatly hampered by the obstinate insistence of King Fuad on the allocation of wide prerogatives to himself. I was in daily touch with Yehia Pasha at this time, and I learnt to appreciate his powers of resistance and his tact in the exercise of them, no less than the astuteness with which he fell back upon my support when His Majesty's demands became difficult of resistance.⁴

Basically the debate revolved around those clauses which increased the powers of the throne in areas such as dissolution of parliament, the conferring of promotions and honours, the granting of pardons, the appointment and dismissal of ministers and

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1. Allenby to Curzon, July 19, 1923, Desp. No. 492, FO/371/8962.
 2. Allenby to Curzon, April 23, 1923, Desp. No. 259, FO/371/8961.
 3. Kedourie is one of Allenby's severest critics in this respect. Kedourie, op.cit., pp.359-60.
 4. Allenby to Curzon, July 19, 1923, Desp. No. 492, FO/371/8962.

diplomats, the number of appointed senators and financial control of Egypt's religious endowments.¹ The pattern of the struggle was one of constant contact between the Residency and Yahya to determine the final form of the draft articles with Allenby then 'endeavouring by friendly advice to induce King to abandon them[Nasim's amendments]'.²

In the end, Allenby was once again compelled to impose his will. A veiled ultimatum was issued on April 19 to obtain the King's agreement to the desired changes. Kerr described the events:

For some time past H.E. has been giving the King advice in regard to the reactionary modifications introduced into the text of the constitution, notably in regard to Articles 23, 36...41, 45 & 71 of the old text, until today the King had successfully evaded acceptance of H.E.'s advice.

This morning however Mr. Rolo was sent to the King on H.E.'s behalf to tell H.M. that H.E. expected him to accept his advice and that failing an immediate reply in the affirmative H.E. would call personally on H.M.

This demarche produced the desired result.

At 5 p.m. the Prime Minister came to the Residency & left the attached text which met with our requirements.³

The constitution was finally promulgated on April 19. It was the product of Allenby's desire to have a representative parliamentary system of government for Egypt and the King's stubborn struggle to preserve the rights he felt were due to the heir of Muhammad Ali, the founder of Egypt's ruling family. As a result, the constitution was a move in the direction of an ideal liberal regime - but still controlled by the monarchy; a document that was moderate in its application of radical principles. Whether it was a workable system is another question entirely.⁴ An electoral law, the inevitable adjunct to a constitution was promulgated on April 30. This provided for

1. This refers to Articles 23, 38, 43, 49, 74, 153 of the draft constitution. For the changes introduced by Nasim, see: Allenby to Curzon, April 23, 1923, Desp. No. 259, FO/371/8962.
2. Allenby to Curzon, April 18, 1923, Tel. No. 119, FO/371/8961.
3. A.C.K[err]., Minute, April 19, 1923, FO/141/516(14431, Pt.I).
4. For a copy of the constitution, see: Helen M. Davis, Constitutions, Electoral Laws, Treaties of States in the Near and Middle East (Durham, N.C., 1953), pp. 26-46; and, Allenby to Curzon, April 23, 1923, Desp. No. 259, FO/371/8962. For an assessment of its value, see: J.M. Landau, Parliaments and Parties in Egypt (Tel Aviv, 1954), pp. 61-3; Kedourie, op.cit., pp. 354-61; and, Lloyd, op.cit., II, 75-6.

universal male suffrage and indirect elections in two stages thereby achieving the first of Yahya's aims.¹

The response to the outcome of the constitutional struggle was more or less predictable. Allenby was extremely pleased that his efforts had borne fruit and he informed Curzon that 'Broadly-speaking there has been a remarkable revulsion of feeling towards us and situation appears to me to be better at present moment than it has been for years past.'² London, on the other hand, was not as positive in its reaction. Lindsay, at least, if given the option of an advanced democratic constitution or real power for Fuad, would take neither; he would choose 'to depose Fuad.'³ Perhaps the most significant response, in terms of the future, was Zaghlul's who declared from France: '...I feel strongly that the Constitution should be submitted to the people's representatives and adopted by them, instead of being merely promulgated by the King.'⁴ In the meantime, however, the situation in Egypt was peaceful and by the end of May, Allenby was able to release a number of Wafd leaders imprisoned in August 1922 as well as Zaghlul's associates still exiled in the Seychelles.

After the promulgation of the constitution and the electoral law, Yahya quickly turned to the resolution of other outstanding issues - such as the act of indemnity, a prerequisite for the abolition of martial law. However, before any steps could be taken in this direction, it was first necessary to frame legislation that would fill the gaps in the Egyptian criminal code. This legislation, dealing mainly with public meetings, preventive detention and a state of siege, aroused tremendous opposition and 'deprived the Prime Minister of much of the popularity he had gained by his earlier successes.'⁵ Many claimed that the new ministry was now promulgating autocratic laws at the request of the Residency so that any new parliament would be faced with a

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1. A copy of the Electoral Law No. 11 appears in Journal Officiel No. 46, April 30, 1923: Loi Electorale, Allenby to Curzon, May 1923, Desp. No. 293, FO/371/8961.
 2. Allenby to Curzon, May 4, 1923, Tel. No. 133, FO/371/8961.
 3. R.C.L[indsay], Minute, May 9 to Allenby to Curzon, April 23, 1923, Desp. No. 259, FO/371/8961. For examples of positive responses in the British press, see: Manchester Guardian, April 21, 1923; Daily Telegraph, April 23, 1923; and, Westminster Gazette, April 21, 1923.
 4. This was an interview given to the Daily News correspondent in France, Daily News, May 1, 1923.
 5. Allenby to Curzon, July 19, 1923, Desp. No. 492, FO/371/8962.

situation it was forced to accept.¹

Yahya nevertheless persisted in his policy and in early May proposed to Allenby that the act of indemnity be recognized by the two countries through an exchange of notes rather than by formal agreement as had been intended previously. He also suggested that a committee with a British majority be established to review sentences imposed on Egyptians under the regime of martial law.² Cecil Hurst, the Foreign Office legal adviser, agreed to the exchange of notes and Allenby recommended the acceptance of the proposed review committee since the power to pardon was a major attribute of sovereignty.³

Again, binding action, as proposed on the indemnity act, before the convening of an elected parliament was opposed in Egypt. There was also a good deal of resentment over the British majority on the sentence review committee. Nevertheless negotiations over the details progressed so well that by July 4 Allenby was able to inform Curzon that the indemnity law would be promulgated and the notes exchanged on the next day, July 5.⁴ Martial law would be abolished simultaneously and an amnesty would be declared for about 250 Egyptians sentenced to less than fifteen years imprisonment by military courts. To evident British relief, the indemnity law was promulgated and martial law, in effect since December 1914, ended as planned.⁵

The final issue that required resolution was that of compensation of foreign officials. Although an ad hoc Joint Anglo-Egyptian Committee had been set up on December 23, 1922 to deal with individual cases as they arose, there was little movement towards a general scheme of compensation for retiring officials. On January 21, 1923, Scott, the British Minister Plenipotentiary in Cairo, sent Tawfiq Nasim a comprehensive proposal but this was quickly rejected, again, because of the fear of taking permanent action in anticipation of a new parliament. By the beginning of March, Allenby reported that 'The continued uncertainty as to the future has caused a

1. For details about the debate over the Assembly Law, see: Allenby to Curzon, July 19, 1923, Desp. No. 486, FO/371/8962.
2. Allenby to Curzon, May 13, 1923, Desp. No. 214, FO/371/8962.
3. Cecil Hurst, Minute, May 24, 1923 to ibid.; and, Allenby to Curzon, June 7, 1923, Tel. No. 168, FO/371/8962.
4. Allenby to Curzon, July 4, 1923, Tel. No. 195, FO/371/8962.
5. For the text of the Egyptian and British notes, the decrees of the Act of Indemnity and the sentence review committee, and Allenby's proclamation ending martial law, see: Allenby to Curzon, July 7, 1923, Desp. No. 459, FO/371/8962. For examples of favourable press reactions in England, see: Daily Chronicle, July 6, 1923; and, Manchester Guardian, July 6, 1923.

widespread feeling of discontent and is impairing the usefulness of the officials while even those who at the outset had no thought of leaving the country are wavering.'¹

At the beginning of May, Allenby informed London that the atmosphere had changed and that serious negotiations for a general settlement were taking place with Yahya. He was, however, careful to note that there would be no attempt to connect the compensation of officials with the indemnity act.² Apparently Yahya's interest in a settlement was motivated by his desire for administrative reasons to prevent an 'increasing number of foreign officials applying to leave' and he even asked that the previous ad hoc arrangements be suspended.³ Draft proposals were presented by Piola Caselli, a legal adviser to the Egyptian government, which, in effect, were an elaboration of proposals made by Amos, Judge Percival of the Mixed Courts, representatives of the Residency and the Central Committee of the Association of British Officials. On June 28, Yahya convened a committee to compose the final draft of the compensation scheme. This committee consisted of Muhibb Pasha, Minister of Finance, Hafiz Hassan Pasha, Minister of Waqfs,⁴ Piola Caselli, Amos and representatives of the Association of British Officials.

The negotiations in July were not as smooth as had been expected because of obstruction and delays by Muhibb Pasha who radically revised the draft scheme to the detriment of retiring officials. After four long and arduous negotiating sessions, agreement was reached because of Allenby's willingness to compromise. The larger diplomatic and political context affected Allenby's approach and he explained to Curzon that 'These tactics by Muhibb Pasha naturally made it less easy than was anticipated to obtain the full advantages of the draft proposals, and, rather than risk a rupture, which on one or two occasions appeared possible, it seemed advisable to give way in part here and there.'⁵ Finally, on July 18, there was an exchange of notes between

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1. Allenby to Curzon, March 9, 1923, Desp. No. 122, FO/371/8966.
 2. Allenby to Curzon, May 5, 1923, Tel. Nos. 134, 135 and 136, FO/371/8966. Curzon suggested just such a procedure to Allenby in Curzon to Allenby, May 2, 1923, Tel. No. 96, FO/371/8966.
 3. Allenby to Curzon, June 8, 1923, Desp. No. 379, FO/371/8966.
 4. Ahmad Ali Pasha was the previous Minister of Waqfs and was to be a member of the committee. He resigned, however, because he opposed the scheme. For details, see: Allenby to Curzon, June 28, 1923, Desp. No. 430, FO/371/8966.
 5. Allenby to Curzon, July 18, 1923, Desp. No. 484, FO/371/8966.

Allenby and Ahmad Hishmat Pasha, the Minister of Justice, agreeing to the compensation law as negotiated. On the next day, July 19, Law No. 28 of 1923¹ relating to the conditions of service, retirement and dismissal of foreign officials was promulgated. This ended, for the time being, an issue that had divided Egypt and Britain as well as Allenby and the Foreign Office since the beginning of negotiations for Egypt's independence.

Thus in less than eighteen stormy months Allenby's efforts to regularise Anglo-Egyptian relations seem to have been crowned by success. Despite the misgivings and often open hostility of his superiors in London, Allenby appeared to have completed the mission he began when he left Egypt on February 2, 1922, uncertain whether he would return as High Commissioner. By August 1923, Egypt had achieved a remarkable degree of internal independence, some measure of formal sovereignty, a constitutional system of government, an indemnity act and the abrogation of martial law, and, finally, the settlement of the thorny issue of compensation for foreign officials. The loose ends of independence had been tied up. It now seemed that the Residency's struggle for disengagement from Egypt's internal affairs had been concluded successfully with little or no sacrifice of vital British interests. It was, therefore, understandable that when Scott, acting for Allenby, summarised the state of political forces in Egypt on the eve of Zaghlul's return, he could so so 'with satisfaction[at]...the extent to which, during the past summer, the process of disengaging ourselves from the interplay of these forces has been continued.'²

The way appeared open for the regularisation of the political system, assuring stability and enabling the continued British withdrawal from Egypt's domestic affairs. Even Zaghlul and the Wafd no longer seemed as ominous as before. In fact, the British in Cairo seemed to believe that, if carefully managed, an equilibrium might be established and maintained between the Palace and the Wafd, with the present Prime Minister remaining in office for the meantime. This might even permit eventually the conclusion of an Anglo-Egyptian settlement on a permanent basis.

And yet a jarring note was soon heard from that very quarter that was being discounted as a serious threat - the Wafd. On November 14, Zaghlul denied any change in

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1. For the exchange of notes and the text of the Law, see: Law No. 28 of 1923, Government Press, Cairo, 1923, in FO/371/8967.
 2. Scott to Curzon, September 14, 1923, Desp. No. 636, FO/371/8962.

his party's policies and declared that 'The Wafd was ready to conclude an agreement with Great Britain on the basis of complete independence for Egypt and respect for those British interests which did not conflict with Egyptian independence and were legitimate.'¹

How 'legitimate' British interests and 'Egyptian independence' were defined and reconciled by the various actors in the coming months would determine whether the policies followed by Allenby during the past two years had been realistic or mere chimera, and whether the future would see continued progress towards a settlement or a lapse into chaos.

1. Times, November 15, 1923.

PART THREE: LONDON'S YEARS, 1924-1925

CHAPTER EIGHT: 'GREAT EXPECTATIONS' - MACDONALD AND ZAGHLUL

The year 1924 began with the promise of change: change in the Egyptian political situation; change in the British government; and, most important, change in the complex network of relationships linking Britain and Egypt, the Foreign Office and Residency. A new ministry led by Zaghlul was to take office in Egypt and the Labour Party, with J. Ramsay MacDonald at its head, was about to form a government in Britain. Both would govern for the first time. Although they were unknown quantities with respect to the exercise of power, their statements and public pronouncements indicated a rough identity of views about the future of Egypt and the nature of that country's permanent relations to Britain. The ties of sympathy and friendship between Labour's leaders and the Wafd reinforced the anticipation of a new pattern of relations, some form of permanent Anglo-Egyptian settlement.

However, within a few months it was apparent that British policy, whether formulated in London or in Cairo, and Egyptian aspirations, as represented by the Wafd, were by no means identical. In fact, less than a year later hopes for a quick settlement had all but vanished and the 'great expectations' of early 1924 seemed somehow to become the Micawber policy of 'waiting for something to turn up.' Even the re-emergence of London as a major focus of policy formulation did not alter this fact.

New Elements: Zaghlul, MacDonald and the Labour Government

On September 18, 1923 Zaghlul returned to Egypt after more than eighteen months of exile. The welcome Zaghlul received was enthusiastic and he seemed mellow in his first public statement making 'a moderate speech saying that he bore no grudge against his old opponents and was prepared to be friendly with everybody.'¹ The same spirit seemed to prevail during Zaghlul's first audience with Fuad. According to one report, he gave 'repeated protestations of loyalty to His Majesty and fidelity to interests of the country.'²

1. Scott to Curzon, September 18, 1923, Tel. No. 239, FO/371/8968.

2. Scott to Curzon, September 18, 1923, Tel. No. 240, FO/371/8968. Murray felt that this report from a reliable source 'was edited in the palace for British consumption.' Murray, Minute, 18.9.23 to ibid.

The Residency was convinced throughout this period that the key to Fuad's relations with Zaghlul was the former's attempt to strike a balance between the Wafd and his own supporters. Fuad thereby 'appreciably fortified his position, partly by holding close contact with elements of the Wafd, partly by introducing his supporters into several high administrative posts.'¹ Fuad's later activities during the election campaign of winter 1923/24 were seen as crucial to its outcome and to the political map of Egypt that was drawn after the elections.

Residency observers felt that it was difficult for Fuad to steer a middle course between groups such as the National Party and the Liberal-Constitutionalists, which he suspected of either Khedivist or republican sympathies, and Zaghlul, whom he once called 'a black bogeyman painted on every wall.' Since Yahya had pledged to conduct the elections in complete neutrality, Fuad could surreptitiously attempt to influence their outcome and destroy the National Party and the supporters of Adli and Tharwat. With respect to the Wafd, he was convinced that he could control Zaghlul through guile and flattery.²

The campaign itself began so mildly that within a few days part of the press 'confessed its inability to agree with Zaghlul's programme of general forgiveness.'³ The tempo of the campaign quickly increased. Zaghlul's main targets were his political opponents in Egypt, especially Adli and Tharwat, and the constitution and electoral law 'as products of unpatriotic minority and of intrigues of Sarwat ministry.'⁴

It was soon clear that Zaghlul would obtain a very large majority. The Residency accepted this fact calmly. Furness wrote to London that 'I have little doubt that it would be a good thing in the long run for him to be Prime Minister.'⁵ Still the major theme of Zaghlul's campaign, al-istiqlal al-tamm [total independence], should have warned the Residency of the difficulties that lay ahead.⁶

1. Scott to Curzon, September 14, 1923, Desp. No. 636, FO/371/8962.
2. Fuad made the following comment to Kerr: 'Saad is like a woman. You can win him with a smile or a rose.' Kerr to MacDonald, October 24, 1924, Desp. No. 641, FO/371/10022.
3. This was al-Mahrussa. Cited in Scott to Curzon, September 23, 1923, Desp. No. 664, FO/371/8963.
4. Scott to Curzon, September 30, 1923, Tel. No. 250, FO/371/8963.
5. Furness to Murray, October 14, 1923, FO/371/8963.
6. For a survey of parties and platforms during the 1923/24 election campaign, see: Landau, op.cit., pp.64ff.

On January 7, Allenby left Cairo for a tour of the Sudan in order to be out of Egypt during the balloting scheduled for January 12. Kerr remained in charge of the Residency. Almost immediately after the voting had taken place, it became apparent that Zaghlul's victory had exceeded all expectations. Nearly 190 out of 214 Deputies were returned as Wafdists. All of Adli's supporters, except Muhammad Mahmud Pasha, had been defeated and even the Prime Minister had not been returned. The Residency responded with equanimity and events were permitted to follow their own course.¹

Yahya Ibrahim, described in October as 'a dear old man but very tired; he requires constant comfort,'² now was inclined to resign almost immediately. This was reinforced by Zaghlul's statement to the Reuters' correspondent that 'if constitutional practice were followed, Yehia Pasha ought to resign.'³ In the meantime there was evidence that the King wished to retain Yahya in office until the assembly of Parliament. Thus Fuad would have a free hand in the selection of the nominated Senators in order to balance Zaghlul's overwhelming majority in the Chamber of Deputies. To this end Fuad tried to enlist Residency support for the continuation of the incumbent ministry, but Kerr refused to intervene and privately told Yahya on January 17 that 'he was taking the proper course in deciding to tender his resignation.'⁴

After a week's hesitation in accepting Yahya's resignation, Fuad asked Zaghlul on January 27 to form a government. Kerr took the unusual step of calling on Zaghlul first and even the Foreign Office seemed satisfied with the new developments. Ingram, in Murray's absence, noted that 'if he [Zaghlul] can be saved from his followers...and if he can work in with the King and the Residency, there is no reason to fear the worst from his advent to power.'⁵ Sir William Tyrrell, who had replaced Lindsay as Assistant Under Secretary of State responsible for Egypt, commented that 'The main struggle will be between Zaghlul and the King: This

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1. Even the British press took the election results calmly. For example, see the leaders: 'Egypt's freedom', Daily Chronicle, January 15, 1924; and, 'The Egyptian Parliament', Times, January 15, 1924.
 2. Furness to Murray, October 14, 1923, FO/371/8963.
 3. Kerr to MacDonald, February 3, 1924, Desp. No. 78, FO/371/10020.
 4. Ibid.
 5. E.M.B. Ingram, Minute, 28.1.24 to Kerr to MacDonald, January 27, 1924, Tel. No. 33, FO/371/10020.

will be their affair and not ours.'¹ The feeling seemed to be that once in power, Zaghlul would become moderate and that his assumption of ministerial responsibility would permit movement towards a settlement. Even if this was not realised, there was relief over the fact that Britain was no longer an adversary in Egyptian politics but instead would serve as a referee observing the various sides manoeuvre for position.

Yet there were already indications that matters would not be so simple. Zaghlul's letter accepting the office of Prime Minister struck a familiar note: 'The elections have clearly shown the nation's unanimity and attachment to the principles of the Wafd and the necessity for the country's enjoying its rights of real independence in Egypt and the Sudan, with due respect to all foreign rights not conflicting with that independence.'² The question, however, remained: how would 'foreign rights' and 'real independence' be reconciled?

Another new element in the ongoing Anglo-Egyptian relationship was the emergence of the Labour government of 1924 with J. Ramsay MacDonald serving both as Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. The policies advocated in the past by this party and the positions on Egypt taken by its leader led to the expectation of new directions in British policy towards Egypt.

In May 1923 Andrew Bonar Law resigned because of ill-health and Stanley Baldwin, a relatively unknown member of the Conservative Cabinet, became Prime Minister. By December Baldwin called a general election over the issue of the imposition of protective tariffs. Although there was little change in the popular vote, there was a dramatic change in the composition of the House of Commons. The final totals were: Conservatives - 259 members; Labour - 191; and, combined Liberals - 159.³

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1. W.T[yrrell].., Minute, 28/1/[24] to ibid.
 2. Kerr to MacDonald, February 3, 1924, Desp. No. 77, FO/371/10020; and, Times, January 29, 1924.
 3. The reasons for the changes were the smaller number of election agreements and the greater number of candidates standing for election. Previous totals were: Conservatives - 346; Labour - 144; and, Liberals - 117. The differences in the popular vote were: Conservatives lost 115,485 votes; Labour gained 121,310; and, Liberals gained 186,109. The total votes cast were more than 14 million. Carl F. Brand, The British Labour Party: A Short History (Stanford, 1964), p.95.

If the Liberals, split into several factions, would support them, then Labour could form a government, albeit a minority one, for the first time in British parliamentary history. On December 18, Herbert Asquith, the former wartime Prime Minister, signalled that support in a speech before all factions of the Liberal Parliamentary Party at the National Liberal Club: 'If a Labour Government is ever to be tried in this country, as it will sooner or later, it could hardly be tried under safer conditions.'¹

From the general discussion of what Labour hoped to achieve as a minority government, four main points emerged: some legislative progress; a period of apprenticeship for Labour leaders in government; the establishment of Labour as a major partner to the Conservatives in the British two-party system instead of the Liberals; and, finally, it was believed that 'the mere presence of Labour men in the seats of the mighty would mean a new atmosphere in government, with incalculable good results.'² In short, there was a desire to show Labour's responsibility in government, even if there were some utopian undertones.

At the start, however, Labour was regarded as a party with a doctrinaire past rather than a pragmatic future, or, as one writer put it: 'Labour was still, on the eve of its succession to office in 1924, a propagandist party.'³ This was particularly noticeable in the area of foreign policy. According to many writers, the party's foreign policy in the pre-1924 period was largely influenced by the radical Union of Democratic Control (U.D.C.) which centred its activities on the Independent Labour Party (I.L.P.) which in turn exercised great influence on the formulation of the Labour Party's foreign programme.⁴ This was more a result of the prestige of the founders and early supporters of the U.D.C., such as Ramsay MacDonald, Arthur Ponsonby, Charles Trevelyan, Norman Angell, E.D. Morel and

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1. H. Asquith, Memories and Reflections (London, 1928), II, 209.
 2. Richard W. Lyman, The First Labour Government, 1924 (London, 1957), p.91.
 3. Ibid., p.15. Similar observations about Labour generally are made by D.C. Somervell, 'The Twentieth Century', p.38; and, H.G. Nicholas, 'The Formulation of Party Policy', p.146 in S.D. Bailey (ed.), The British Party System (London, 1952).
 4. For details on the activities and influence of the U.D.C., see: A.J.P. Taylor, The Troublemakers: Dissent over Foreign Policy: 1792-1939 (London, 1957), 132ff.; Craig and Gilbert, op.cit., pp. 23-4; Brand, op.cit., pp. 60-1; Lyman, op.cit., p.157ff.; and, Marvin Swartz, The Union of Democratic Control, in British Politics during the First World War (Oxford, 1971), passim.

others, and their keen interest in foreign affairs, than of their numerical preponderance in the Labour Party. In any event, the attitudes of the U.D.C., with its antipathy for traditional policy and the 'old diplomacy', affected the centrist groups in the Labour Party and coloured the style and content of its platform.

The history of the Labour Party's policy on Egypt since the end of the First World War reflected its general policy on imperial issues and gave rise to a political tradition which it brought with it into office. Even before the end of the War, elements within the party began to indicate their views on post-war policy towards Egypt. At the Leeds Conference of June 3, 1917, the motion on peace proposed by Philip Snowden, a close associate of MacDonald and Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1924, was passed by the Conference. It declared that in areas such as Egypt, the right of the people to determine their own destinies should be observed by all concerned.¹

This approach was quickly adopted by the party as a whole and at its 1919 Annual Conference, the resolution on Egypt condemned the deportation of the Wafd leaders and demanded 'that the principle of self-determination be applied to the Government of Egypt.'² This was expanded by the 1920 Annual Conference which unanimously adopted George Lansbury's motion:

That the right of the Egyptian people to independent responsible government be fully recognised; and that British action in Egypt, whether for the protection of the Suez Canal, the administration of the Soudan, or otherwise, be limited to that which the responsible Nationalist Government of Egypt may freely give its consent.³

Similar resolutions were adopted and statements made at the 1921 and 1922 Annual Conferences⁴ and a group of Labour M.P.'s began an active campaign on behalf of Zaghlul and Egyptian independence. This was mainly through the vehicle

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1. Brand, op.cit., p.45. This conference was sponsored by the I.L.P. and the British Socialist Party which together formed the United Socialist Council. With the support of Lansbury and the Daily Herald, they organised the Leeds Conference. The Labour Party and the T.U.C., however, refused to participate, so the left wing of the party was most strongly represented at Leeds.
 2. Labour Party, Report of the 19th Annual Conference of the Labour Party, 25-27 June 1919, p.172.
 3. Labour Party, Report of the 20th Annual Conference of the Labour Party, 22-25 June 1920, p.159.
 4. Labour Party, Report of the 21st Annual Conference of the Labour Party, 21-24 June 1921, p.146; and, Report of the 22nd Annual Conference of the Labour Party, 27-30 June 1922, pp. 36-37.

of the Egypt Parliamentary Committee which counted among its members most of Labour's parliamentary leadership. They engaged in activities such as visits to Egypt, public statements and pressure on the government of the day.¹

The assumption of the offices of Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary in January 1924 by MacDonald, one of the strongest supporters of Labour's Egyptian policy, was particularly significant for future developments. From the start there was concern that MacDonald would not be able to bear the burden of his two offices. This concern ranged from King George V to Asquith whose support made a Labour government possible.² Within the Foreign Office there was a lack of confidence in a man so closely associated with the advocates of a radical foreign policy in earlier years. Vansittart, Curzon's last Private Secretary, commented on the general apprehension:

The Foreign Office was less confident of the new Messiah who in the wilderness had voiced his contempt for 'hangers-on of the diplomatic classes' and traced Grey's troubles to his officials. We had also heard of him, with C.P. Trevelyan, Norman Angell, E.D. Morel and Arthur Ponsonby, in the fuddled Union of Democratic Control. He talked much nonsense during the war but little afterwards. In full becoming MacDonald found human dust-storms not easily laid, though his novices wrote that 'he opened the windows of the Foreign Office, and let the fresh air of democracy flow in.'³

Although the main areas of concern in foreign affairs during 1924 were the normalisation of Anglo-Russian relations, reparations and the consequences of the French occupation of the Ruhr, and European security, the Egyptian question still needed a long-term solution. MacDonald brought with him a well-defined public position on this question. In addition to his previous participation in the activities of the Egypt Parliamentary Committee, MacDonald had also taken a clear personal stand long before coming to office.

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1. For examples of pressure and statements, see: Members of the Egypt Parliamentary Committee to Lloyd George, July 8, 1922, FO/371/7735; and, the letter signed by 97 M.P.'s in Times, March 29, 1923.
 2. Harold Nicolson, King George the Fifth: His Life and Reign (London, 1952), p.385. Asquith noted in his diary on February 15, 1924: 'Poor Ramsay - who looks every day more and more like a ghost...and has taken on a burden far too heavy for a man, who is not composed...in equal proportions of iron and leather....' Asquith, op.cit., II, 110. Also, see: Bishop, op.cit., p.85; and, Lyman, op.cit., p.230.
 3. Vansittart, op.cit., pp. 323-3. Vansittart concludes the passage cited: 'He did nothing of the sort, but got down to work as to the manner born.'

At the 1920 Annual Conference, MacDonald stated that he 'regarded the aspiration of Egypt as a righteous one and called upon Great Britain to fulfill a pledge which she had given from time to time.'¹ A year later MacDonald travelled to Egypt where he met and developed ties of friendship with leading members of the nationalist movement. The trip resulted in a number of major articles in the British press in February 1922 which condemned British policy as responsible for inflaming native sentiment and called for an accommodation with and understanding of Zaghlul as the only possible solution.² Even after Egypt received nominal independence and six months before Labour's rise to power, MacDonald in May and June 1923 outlined the policy that Labour would adopt once in office:

...MacDonald depicted how a Labour Government would salvage the situation. It would let the Egyptian people revise their constitution, invite Zaghlul and other exiles back to participate in the coming election and make certain it was a free one, restrict the limits of the Indemnity Act, and offer a treaty to the Egyptian Government defining relationships and sealing the friendship of two independent nations.³

It is little wonder, therefore, that there was widespread anticipation of a change in British policy towards Egypt when Labour came into office. Zaghlul's son-in-law, Amin Yussuf, noted in this respect that

It is a curious fact that Zaghloul's accession to power in Egypt practically coincided with the accession of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald at the head of the first Labour Government in Great Britain. There can be little doubt that Zaghloul had high hopes of the Labour Government. He was a personal friend of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. Labour Members had come to Egypt and actually assisted in the Nationalist campaigns. A large proportion of the Egypt Parliamentary Committee in England had been members of the Labour Party. A considerable section of the new British Cabinet were pledged almost as deeply as Zaghloul himself to the policy of the Wafd.⁴

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1. Labour Party, 20th Annual Conference..., pp. 159-60.
 2. For example, see MacDonald's articles: 'The Deadlock in Egypt', 'Lord Allenby's Mission', and 'Egypt as I found It', in Westminster Gazette, February 10, 18, and March 3, 1922.
 3. Based on Socialist Review, May 1923, and New Leader, June 23, 1923. Cited in Benjamin Sacks, J. Ramsay MacDonald in Thought and Action (New Mexico, 1952), p.445.
 4. Amin Yussuf, op.cit., pp. 113-14. Amin Yussuf was married to Zaghlul's niece, his adopted daughter, and was an anglophile because of his English rather than French education.

The leaders of the Wafd were quick to acknowledge this coincidence. Muhammad Said Pasha, a possible Wafd^{supported} candidate for Prime Minister, stated in an interview in al-Balagh that 'Zaghlul's presence at the head of the Egyptian Cabinet and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's presence at the head of the British Cabinet would be a happy coincidence which must not be missed.'¹ At the same time Zaghlul congratulated MacDonald on his election success in very warm terms: 'Heartiest congratulations. Am sure this new era will be one of universal peace and amity in general and of understanding and friendship between our country and yours in particular.'²

The anticipation of change and hopes for success were strong indeed. It only remained to be seen whether, to paraphrase a nineteenth century parliamentarian, the Labour Party in Office could be expected to carry out the policy of the Labour Party Out of Office.³

Altered Relationships: The Residency

After the initial successes of the Residency in 1923, relationships began to change and take on new shapes. The role of the Residency in the formulation of policy, its place in Egyptian politics, and, most significantly, its relationship to the main actors of the piece, Zaghlul in Cairo and MacDonald and the Foreign Office in London, began to change. While these changes occurred for different reasons and at varying rates, they all contributed to a new position and attitude on the part of Allenby and his establishment in Egypt.

Since independence there had been considerable change in the body of British officials that had served Allenby with its expertise. Beyond the large number of officials in the civil service who had retired or resigned after independence or after the promulgation of Law 28, some of the advisers had either left Egypt or were under increasing local pressure which made their positions difficult. Shortly after independence Gilbert Clayton, one of Allenby's most trusted aides, resigned as Adviser to the Ministry of Interior because he felt his position was

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1. Cited in Morning Post, January 23, 1923.
 2. Zaghlul to MacDonald, January 23, 1923, FO/371/10039.
 3. This is based on O'Donnell's jibe at Gladstone's interference in Egyptian affairs in 1882. Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Series, CCLXIX (1882), 1729.

no longer viable in an independent Egypt. Dowson, the Financial Adviser, was replaced because of his wife's poor health and Sir Maurice Amos, Allenby's other close aide and the initiator of many of the Residency's policies, was reaching the end of his tenure as Judicial Adviser and would remain at his position in coming months with increasing difficulty.¹ By 1924 only the Financial and Judicial advisers remained at their posts.

The same process was going on within the Residency itself since the winter of 1921/22. Walford Selby, First Secretary at the Residency, returned to London at the height of the crisis over independence. There were changes at the lower levels as well and Owen Tweedy, at the Residency since 1919, would leave in 1924.² Perhaps the most serious loss to the Residency was the disgrace and recall of Ernest Scott, the British Minister Plenipotentiary in Cairo.

Scott, who had been in Cairo since Allenby's appointment, became involved in a dispute with Muhibb Pasha, the Minister of Finance in Yahya's ministry. Muhibb, with a 'well deserved reputation for dishonest speculation and sharp practices of all kinds,'³ had been a thorn in the side of the government and Residency since his appointment, apparently at the insistence of Fuad. During the summer of 1923 Yahya felt that Muhibb should be removed from his position because of illegal profiteering in the depressed cotton market. Scott intervened rather clumsily and engaged in a public dispute with Muhibb. The Foreign Office angrily decided that Scott's poor judgement meant that his 'utility in Cairo has ceased & he ought to be recalled.'⁴ Scott's disgrace further reduced the number of

1. Amos was under increasing pressure because of the central position he occupied among Allenby's advisers. In London, there was resentment at Amos' comments over British policy and the influence he had. For example, after Amos privately spoke to a Labour M.P. in Egypt in 1923, Crowe noted: 'I am a little astonished at the way in which Sir M. Amos without, so far as I know, any authority, expounds...what he considers the proper policy for HMG to adopt.' EAC[rowe]., Minute, Ap. 5, Allenby to Curzon, March 24, 1923, Desp. No. 173, FO/371/8961. Curzon added: 'I think we should express some marked surprise in a private letter to Lord Allenby at the performance of Sir M. Amos.' C[urzon]., Minute, 6/4, to ibid. By mid-1924 Amos was having difficulties with the Egyptian government because of his position and views.
2. For changes in the Residency staff, see: Foreign Office, Diplomatic Year Book, 1919 through 1925.
3. ACK[err]., to H.E., March 15, 1923, FO/141/627 (724) (Pt.II).
4. R.C.L[indsay]., Minute, August 20, 1923, to ibid.

Allenby's supporters in Cairo and weakened his staff at the Residency.

This slow process of decline was abetted by the rise to power of MacDonald whose position as Prime Minister strengthened his authority as Foreign Secretary. Another factor was MacDonald's attitude towards Allenby, essentially one of suspicion. This gave further impetus to the hostility felt by many in the Foreign Office towards the Residency in Cairo.

MacDonald's animosity had its origins in his trip to Egypt in the early months of 1922. Because of the political situation in Egypt and the difficulties created by other Labour M.P.'s in Egypt, Allenby's advice was sought by London before a visa was issued to MacDonald.¹ Allenby agreed to the issue of a visa but warned that 'he [MacDonald] must not make speeches or take part in politics,' adding that 'Martial Law is in force and I shall not hesitate to employ it if necessary.'² As a result MacDonald was granted a visa and imprudently told by the Foreign Office 'that Lord Allenby has asked that owing to the present position of affairs in Egypt a condition should be imposed that during your stay in that country you should not make speeches, nor take any part in politics.'³ Selby, MacDonald's Private Secretary in 1924, described in later years the atmosphere at the Foreign Office:

...to my horror, I found the position with Ramsay MacDonald was not easy, since Ramsay MacDonald attributed to Allenby's actions certain limitations on his visit to Egypt in 1921 which Ramsay MacDonald bitterly resented....It was in the early months of 1924 that I became vaguely aware of an atmosphere in London unfavourable to Allenby which caused me to resist it. It may have arisen from all those critics of Allenby...⁴

Allenby, for his part, was suspicious of MacDonald because of the latter's activities and statements on Egypt. The bitter and, at times, vicious criticism of Allenby and his policy that appeared on the pages of the Labour Party newspaper, the Daily Herald, may have also affected relations.⁵ It was within this context

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1. Foreign Office to Allenby, December 24, 1921, Tel. No. 546, FO/141/799(4081).
 2. Allenby to Foreign Office, December 25, 1921, Tel. No. 688, FO/141/799(4081).
 3. G.H. Villiers to MacDonald, January 3, 1922, FO/141/799(4081).
 4. Selby to Wavell, November 15, 1939, KAP.
 5. According to Wavell: 'The Prime Minister was inclined to regard the soldier [Allenby] as a heavy-handed reactionary...' Wavell, op.cit., p.107. Examples of the phrases and themes referring to Egypt that recur in the Daily Herald are: 'riders to the sea' [Allenby and aides], January 25, 1922; 'bully and persecute' and 'bayonet rule', February 6, 1922; 'blare and blaze of fine sentiments', March 1, 1922; 'His [Allenby] attempt to rule by a puppet Ministry', January 15, 1923; 'the Military Dictator [Allenby]', February 13, 1923; 'Prussianism' [Allenby's policies], March 7, 1923; and, 'barbarity of British policy', April 2, 1923.

of declining influence and new conditions in Egypt that Allenby and the Residency had to redefine their role and establish a modus vivendi with Zaghlul and the Wafd.

Given the existing situation Allenby and the Residency decided to maintain an attitude of disengagement from Egypt's internal political affairs. This was especially true since Fuad and Zaghlul were now seen as the two extremes in a rough, political equilibrium. Strict neutrality was maintained during the election campaign:

...the policy that has been followed has been to ignore Saad. No attention has been paid to the repeated overtures he and his followers have made in order to get in touch privately with us, since to have acquiesced would have been to recognise that he did in fact occupy the position he claimed. And Y.E. has stated that it was your intention to maintain this policy until Zaghlul acquired a new position by success at the polls.¹

Zaghlul's victory, however, meant that a new position had to be adopted. Despite the long history of antagonism between the Residency and Zaghlul, Kerr advised Allenby that some sort of ~~rap~~rochement was necessary because

While it is essential that we should maintain our attitude of independence we should not remain mere spectators of what passes and thus, through detachment of events and ignorance of facts, be at a disadvantage when a Zaghlulist cabinet takes office and the time comes to establish official relations.²

Kerr, therefore, asked for permission to get in touch with Zaghlul and the Wafd privately if they were elected with a large majority while Allenby was in the Sudan.

The opportunity to exhibit Residency independence and establish contact with Zaghlul came after the elections when Fuad sought to enlist the Residency's assistance in retaining Yahya as Prime Minister. Kerr refused to become involved and reported to London on January 15 that 'In order to prevent misunderstanding I have taken steps privately to make Zaghlul aware of my attitude.'³ This new Residency

1. A.C.K[err], to H.E., January 4, 1924, FO/141/484(278). This memo was the result of several meetings held at the Residency by Kerr, Amos, Furness, Tweedy and Patterson to discuss policy after Zaghlul's anticipated victory at the polls.

2. Ibid.

3. Kerr to Curzon, January 15, 1924, Tel. No. 21, FO/371/10020.

approach was applauded at the Foreign Office as both 'wise & timely' and Tyrrell added 'Let Fuad & Zaghlul fight it out & we keep the ring.'¹

Personal contact with Zaghlul soon followed and on January 19 Kerr had a two-hour long conversation with the Wafd leader. Zaghlul was nervous at first: 'friendly but seems suspicious & inclined to fence.'² Kerr believed that this first interview would clear the air and prepare the way for further contacts. On January 24, Kerr again saw Zaghlul, by now far less suspicious, and 'took occasion to explain to him confidentially and in detail what our attitude has been in regard to constitution and succeeded I think in dispelling his misconceptions.'³ Kerr's final gesture was to call on Zaghlul officially when he took office. He explained at length why he departed from usual practice and did not wait for Zaghlul to call on him first:

...I was influenced by the belief that, in view of what had happened in the past, Zaghlul Pasha would himself be reluctant to make the first official gesture of friendliness towards the Residency. It seemed to me to be important not to stand on any ceremony in this matter, or, indeed, even to allow it to become a subject of discussion or negotiation. Moreover, I thought it not unfitting thus to mark the change that had taken place in the political status of the new Government as compared with its predecessors, in virtue of its parliamentary character.⁴

Allenby adopted a similar approach when he returned to Egypt on February 21 and immediately called on Zaghlul. Kerr summed up the results of that meeting in a letter to Tyrrell: 'Saad and Lord Allenby have taken a great fancy to each other. I was a little anxious about their first meeting, but it went with a flick.'⁵

Still there were those who could not rid themselves of suspicion of Zaghlul whom Austen Chamberlain later described as 'sly, scheming, corrupt and autocratic.'⁶ Some thought that Zaghlul was only playing a clever game and that the

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1. W.T. Tyrrell, Minute, 16/1, to Curzon to Allenby, January 17, 1924, Tel. No. 17, FO/371/10020.
 2. Kerr to Curzon, January 21, 1924, Tel. No. 27, FO/371/10020.
 3. Kerr to MacDonald, January 27, 1924, Tel. No. 33, FO/371/10020.
 4. Kerr to MacDonald, February 3, 1924, Desp. No. 78, FO/371/10020. MacDonald replied to this that: 'I have read your report with interest and desire to convey to you an expression of my entire approval of your action, which reflects great credit on your tact and judgement.' MacDonald to Kerr, February 15, 1924, Desp. No. 168, FO/371/10020.
 5. Kerr to Tyrrell, February 23, 1924, FO/371/10039.
 6. Sir Charles A. Petrie, The Life and Letters of the Rt. Hon. Sir Austen Chamberlain (London, 1940), II, 341.

raprochement between the British and the Wafd would end in disaster. Despite the friendliness, the gap between interests and aspirations was seen as too wide to bridge. Richard More, the Sudan Government Agent in Cairo, gloomily wrote to Selby that

...I cannot help thinking that the powers place far too much confidence in the smiles of Zaghloul. I cannot believe that such a savage old man can really lick our hands without meaning to bite on the first opportunity. He is of course as clever as possible, and can bide his time. In my opinion Archie Kerr is making a mistake that one has seen so often of trying to take on an Oriental, and such an Oriental, at his own game.

At present our policy is to give their head to any extent possible, and I cannot help thinking that we are overdoing it. They don't thank us, and of course only consider our concessions as signs of weakness.¹

The forthcoming negotiations would tell who was correct.

Early Developments

The new atmosphere in Cairo and in London soon left its mark on developments in Egypt. This could be seen in the release of political prisoners still serving sentences imposed by British military courts under the old regime of martial law.

During Kerr's visit to Zaghlul to congratulate him upon his accession to office, the new Egyptian Prime Minister 'expressed his desire to establish most cordial relations' and then referred to the remaining Egyptian prisoners.² Zaghlul asked for the release of those sentenced for crimes against Egyptians and Egyptian public security, while those convicted of crimes against British or foreign subjects would be unaffected. Since this meant waiving the British veto over the release of prisoners convicted under martial law, Kerr cabled Allenby in the Sudan for instructions.

Allenby was willing to go beyond Zaghlul's request and he expressed willingness to release all Egyptian prisoners except six who were sentenced in the summer of 1923 for conspiracy to murder British subjects.³ In forwarding Allenby's views

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1. More to Selby, March 25, 1924, MacDonald Papers, FO/800/218. More was suspicious of Zaghlul because of the friction between the Sudan government and the Egyptian government.
 2. Kerr to MacDonald, January 31, 1924, Te. No. 36, FO/371/10039.
 3. For a description of events see Tweedy to Wavell, March 4, 1938, KAP. As of July 1923 when martial law was abolished there were 450 prisoners undergoing sentences imposed by martial law. of these 288 were freed as a result of a general amnesty. The remaining 159 were people convicted of murder, attempted murder, bomb outrages, riot and arson. Kerr to MacDonald, February 1, 1924, Tel. No. 37, FO/371/10039.

to London on February 5, Kerr asked for an early and positive reply because

I think a general atmosphere of friendliness is already being established and nothing would do more to consolidate feelings of mutual confidence so desirable as a preliminary to negotiations as this act of clemency on our part which would be an evident proof of our goodwill and help finally to dispel after effects of regime of martial law which was so distasteful to both sides.¹

At the same time Zaghlul contacted MacDonald in London. Aziz Izzat Pasha, the Egyptian Minister, called upon MacDonald with a note from Zaghlul urgently requesting the release of the prisoners since 'the Ministry were being subject to a good deal of criticism in Egypt on the point.'² This meeting had the desired effect and even before receipt of the Residency's views, MacDonald noted: 'I agree to the release. I assume that Lord Allenby also agrees but in any event they should be set free.'³ On February 7, the Egyptian Minister in London and the Residency in Cairo were informed that MacDonald had agreed to the release. According to Kerr, this was seen in Egypt as 'a triumph for Zaghlul Pasha, and afforded a welcome testimonial of the tardy realisation in British minds that in him they had to deal with a man who had the country behind him, and with whom the head of the British Government can negotiate on terms of equality and in a friendly spirit.'⁴

The next issue to be dealt with was that of negotiations and the opening of Egypt's parliament was its occasion. From the very beginning it was clear that both sides, in differing degrees, were interested in negotiations. According to one report, as early as mid-December 1923, Zaghlul told Fuad that 'negotiations with the British Government would be commenced as soon as possible after the opening of Parliament, and would be pursued on the lines of the Wafd Programme of complete national independence.'⁵ The Residency, for its part, also contemplated the imminent prospect of negotiations and saw as its proper role the bringing together of London and Zaghlul for this purpose.

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1. Kerr to MacDonald, February 5, 1924, Tel. No. 41, FO/371/10039.
 2. Zaghlul to Izzat Pasha, February 5, 1924, FO/371/10039.
 3. W. Selby, Minute, February 5, 1924, FO/371/10039. Lloyd is extremely critical of MacDonald's intervention and implicitly links it, mistakenly, with the opening of the Egyptian parliament. Lloyd, op.cit., II, 82-3.
 4. Kerr to MacDonald, February 16, 1924, Desp. No. 107, FO/371/10040.
 5. SIS Report 4352./I, January 10, 1924, FO/371/10039.

Therefore, on February 5, Tweedy proposed that Britain's message of congratulations to the Egyptian government on the convening of Parliament 'should not contain mere expressions of goodwill and appreciation, but that it should register another step forward in the direction of the establishment of permanent relations of amity between the two countries. These relations depend on the outcome of negotiations.'¹ Fearing the possibility of a 'silly impasse' in which for tactical reasons each side waited for the other to take the initiative, Tweedy proposed that the 'message should be made the medium of a general invitation to negotiate.'²

Conditions in Egypt, Zaghlul's present strength and the Egyptian perception of a friendly Labour government made such a course desirable. This was especially true in view of the apparent eagerness of Fuad and Zaghlul to negotiate a new relationship with Britain.³ With respect to the venue of negotiations, an issue of great importance, Kerr expressed the Residency view

that it would be politic to let us do all the spade work here. Then Saad could make his gesture of going to London, but only to sign. This would greatly diminish the risk of a rupture in London, which would be disastrous - whereas we could rupt away quite happily here and no one would mind.⁴

London's view of negotiations differed somewhat from that of the Residency. The first public indication of the Labour government's attitude was MacDonald's statement in the House of Commons on February 25. In remarks that could just as easily have been made by Curzon, MacDonald indicated the orthodoxy and continuity of British policy despite the dramatic change in government. He informed Parliament that Britain still awaited word from Egypt on negotiations and that 'His Majesty's present Government regard themselves as bound by the Declaration to Egypt of the 28th of February, 1922.'⁵

1. OMT [weedy] to Furness, February 15 [1924], FO/141/821(17029).
2. Ibid. For agreement in the Residency, see, Minutes by Kerr, 20/2/14 and Furness, 22/2/24 to ibid.
3. For Fuad's views, see Allenby's report of his first interview with the King after his return from the Sudan, Allenby to MacDonald, February 21, 1924, Tel. No. 50, FO/371/10039. For Zaghlul's views, see Kerr to Tyrrell, February 23, 1924, FO/371/10039.
4. Ibid.
5. Parliamentary Question, February 25, 1924, FO/371/10039. There were demonstrations in Egypt as a result of these comments. Allenby to MacDonald, March 2, 1924, Desp. No. 142, FO/371/10039.

The government's approach to the entire question was further expanded in a personal letter from Tyrrell to Kerr on March 6. The letter was read and corrected by MacDonald, constituting an authoritative albeit informal expression of policy. Tyrrell, taking a long-range view of the initiative for talks, their venue and contents, wrote that 'we should wait for the initiative in the matter to come from the Egyptian side.'¹ In addition, he felt that it was necessary to know Zaghlul's views and thereby assess prospects for success before serious talks could begin. This was crucial since 'It is unnecessary to emphasise the disastrous consequences which would follow from a breakdown of official negotiations once they had been embarked upon.'² Finally, the basic British desiderata of a separate regime for the Sudan and the continued presence of British troops in Egypt remained unchanged.

Movement towards negotiations quickened in early March with the imminent convening of the Egyptian Parliament. Kerr was informed by Zaghlul on March 7 that Fuad, in his Speech from the Throne, 'would express the readiness of the Egyptian Government to begin negotiations with H.M. Govt. at an early date; and he suggested that Mr. MacDonald's message might be in the form of a reply to the King's speech.'³

A compromise was proposed on the basis of Tweedy's earlier suggestion, namely, that simultaneous declarations of interest in negotiations be made by Egypt and Britain on the occasion of the opening of Parliament. At the same interview Kerr proposed to Zaghlul that the ground work for talks be laid in Cairo and an agreement signed in London. Zaghlul, however, was firm in his desire to negotiate only in London 'for he felt sure that if he were able to discuss the Egyptian question in person with Mr. MacDonald and men of all parties...he would be able to convince them of reasonableness and his sincerity & that we have nothing to lose by giving Egypt what she wanted.'⁴

On March 9 Allenby informed MacDonald of the results of Kerr's conversation with Zaghlul. He recommended that a message be sent by MacDonald stating that

Egypt and Great Britain I am convinced are destined to be associated in a close and friendly relationship. It is our desire to see

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1. Tyrrell to Kerr, March 6, 1924, FO/371/10039.
 2. Ibid.
 3. ACK [err] to HE, March 8/24, FO/141/821(17029)
 4. Ibid.

this relationship established upon lasting basis satisfactory to both countries and to this end His Majesty's Government are now and at all times ready to negotiate with Egyptian Government.¹

London accepted this last suggestion since it 'does not seriously compromise our position' and Allenby was informed that messages would be sent by the King to Fuad and by MacDonald to Zaghlul along the lines suggested.² With regard, however, to Zaghlul's desire to negotiate in London, MacDonald was uncompromising and cabled Cairo that

Proposal that forthcoming negotiations should take place in London does not commend itself to me and I fear that in making it Zaghlul Pasha is greatly underestimating the difficulties which will have to be overcome before any settlement is possible. I consider it essential that the whole ground covered by the negotiations should be thoroughly but unostentatiously explored in Cairo and complete agreement reached upon all important points before any date for the so-called official negotiations is even mentioned.³

Messages, however, were duly exchanged and the mutual desire to negotiate was declared in an atmosphere of goodwill and congratulations that seemed to characterise the early months of this period.⁴ Still, the serious questions of where negotiations would be held, their form and content were as yet unresolved.

Shortly after the opening of Parliament, the Residency returned to the question of negotiations. Essentially, the Residency continued to see itself as paving the way to talks between Zaghlul and MacDonald, its chief aim being to remove the obstacles standing between the two sides. Therefore once both declared a willingness to negotiate, Allenby and his advisers turned to the matter of the venue and formal invitation for the forthcoming talks. In this phase,

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1. Allenby to MacDonald, March 9, 1924, Tel. No. 62, FO/371/10039.
 2. For London's reaction, see: Murray, Minute, 10.3.24, and W.T[yrrell]., Minute, 10/3, to ibid. An indication of the Cabinet's role in formulating policy towards Egypt was the fact that here, as on other similar Egyptian questions, the Cabinet was informed by MacDonald of decisions after the fact rather than consulted beforehand. Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 20(24), March 12, 1924, CAB/23/47.
 3. MacDonald to Allenby, March 13, 1924, Tel. No. 52, FO/371/10039.
 4. For examples of the response in the British press, see: 'The New Egypt', Manchester Guardian, March 17, 1924; and, 'The New Egyptian Parliament', Times, March 17, 1924.

the Residency attempted to serve as an 'honest broker' between MacDonald and Zaghlul, negotiating, as it were, with both sides at the same time.

Originally the Residency and the Foreign Office agreed that substantive talks should take place in Cairo before formal signature of an agreement in London. Since then, however, Zaghlul had expressed to Kerr his firm wish to negotiate directly with MacDonald. As a result, Tweedy proposed on March 18 that negotiations in London would be 'safer & more promising of success' because a refusal 'will be reminiscent of H.M.G.'s tactics in the winter 1918/19.'¹ Keenly aware of local factors affecting the Residency's position, Tweedy justified a sharp reversal of the Residency's previous approach because agitation in Parliament might force a harassed Zaghlul to take extreme political positions,² and also because talks in Egypt could not be secret thereby subjecting Zaghlul to intense pressure. He concluded that 'The F.O. request [for talks in Cairo] is easily made but difficult to put into effect.'³

According to Tweedy, there was much to commend London as the venue of talks. First, to deny Zaghlul his express wish would destroy much of his recently acquired confidence in British intentions. Second, 'Zaghlul trusts the Labour party, but...does not trust the F.O. The Labour party is represented here by the F.O.'⁴ Third, if Zaghlul went to London, the storm centre would be removed from Egypt. Finally, time was important 'as Egypt would be more amenable to negotiations with a Labour Government than with a possible Liberal or Conservative successor.'⁵

Furness agreed with Tweedy's views and urged that this case be made to London even though this 'is not likely to appeal to the F.O. so much as to ourselves.'⁶ Fear about the possible effects of the failure of talks in Cairo and apprehension about the volatile Egyptian situation weighed heavily on Residency

1. O.M.T[weedy]., 18/3/[24], FO/141/821(17029).

2. For example, Allenby reported that there was an uproar over the Sudan already on March 16. 'A section of the House insisted upon an amendment of the Minutes in order to place on official record the cries of "Long live the King of Egypt and the Soudan!" which had been raised during the reading of the King's speech on the previous day.' Allenby to MacDonald, March 22, 1924, Desp. No. 189, FO/371/10040.

3. O.M.T[weedy]., 18/3 [24], FO/141/821(17029).

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. R.F[urness]., Minute, 19.3.24 to ibid.

considerations and on March 29, Kerr, Amos, Furness and Tweedy recommended to Allenby that the talks be held in London.¹ Allenby accepted his advisers' views and recommended to London on March 31 that Zaghlul be permitted to come to London for talks in June.²

The Foreign Office accepted the Residency view only in part. Murray and Tyrell saw some merit in Allenby's arguments but still felt that some preliminary work had to be done in Cairo since they feared a repetition of the Adli negotiations of 1921 and the dangerous consequences of failure.³ MacDonald agreed and noted that 'The Residency has changed its mind and we must accept its new decision. If Zag. could be made to talk informally on the two main points he might be approached. But to ask him formally to say what he expects will only harden matters.'⁴ MacDonald then proposed a compromise between holding talks entirely in Cairo or in London. He agreed to hold substantive talks in London after Zaghlul had been informally sounded by Allenby in Cairo since

Until I have some indication that his aspirations do not conflict too hopelessly with our irreducible requirements regarding the Sudan and the defence of the Canal in particular I would be unwilling to ask him to undertake negotiations in London.⁵

Amos, on leave in London, partially explained Foreign Office reluctance to have

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1. ACK[err]to HE, March 29, 1924, FO/141/821(17029). There was disagreement at this meeting over prospects for success. Furness and Amos were pessimistic while Kerr would not make any predictions. Ibid. With respect to Residency fears over an explosion in Egypt in the near future, Keown-Boyd sent Kerr a letter on March 17 indicating that the present state was similar to that which preceded the outbreak in 1921. Patterson agreed. Kerr, however, was confident. ACK[err]to H.E., March 27, 1924, FO/141/484(278). Allenby accepted Kerr's assessment and forwarded notes by Keown-Boyd and Patterson to London with his own confident views. Allenby to MacDonald, April 12, 1924, Desp. No. 256, C.P.276(24), CAB/24/166.
 2. Allenby to MacDonald, March 31, 1924, Tel. No. 83, FO/371/10040.
 3. Murray, Minute, 1.4.24, and W.T[yrrell]., Minute, 2.4.24 to ibid.
 4. J.R.M[acDonald]., Minute, 8/4/24 to ibid.
 5. MacDonald to Allenby, April 3, 1924, Tel. No. 67, FO/371/10040. This refusal to hold talks in London also carried over to informal talks with Zaghlul's unofficial emissary in London, Dr. Hamid Mahmud. Dr. Mahmud had been sent to London by Zaghlul to begin early talks with MacDonald, his associates and Labour leaders. After a number of meetings, Mahmud accepted the British refusal to negotiate through him in London. For details, see: A.P[onsonby]., Memorandum, 2.4.1924, MacDonald Papers, FO/800/227; and A. Ponsonby, Minute, April 2, 1924, FO/371/10040; Ponsonby to Mahmud, April 8, 1924, FO/371/10040; and, A. Ponsonby, Memorandum, April 15, 1924, FO/371/10040.

Zaghlul in London for political reasons. He informed Kerr that

I find Tyrrell opposed to allowing him to come, unless the ground has first been cleared. His main reason is that S[aad]. Z[aghlul]. in London endeavouring to work on and with the I.L.P. [Independent Labour Party] will excite great suspicion in Parliament or the country, and therefore embarrass the P.M.¹

In any event, the Residency response was one of intense disappointment to 'Mr. MacDonald's almost impossible instructions to hold informal talks in Cairo.'² Kerr wanted to be able to inform Zaghlul that he could come to London and only then would it be possible to hold informal talks. Allenby agreed and rejected the Foreign Office comparison of the 1921 Adli conversations with the present situation. He felt that now Zaghlul and not Adli was at the centre and 'Besides, in the event of a breakdown, our position is safeguarded by the Declaration of February 28th, whereas, when the breakdown with Adli took place we had nothing.'³ Allenby, therefore, repeated his arguments in a cable to the Foreign Office and warned MacDonald of the danger of attempting to negotiate in Cairo before inviting Zaghlul to London or of predicating such an invitation upon prior agreement, however informal, over troop dispositions and the future of the Sudan.⁴

Once again the Foreign Office was faced with Residency reluctance, if not outright refusal, to follow explicit instructions. Tyrrell very pointedly noted that 'These telegrams show very clearly that unless we are prepared to force the Residency to take any stand in these negotiations, we cannot expect assistance from them and must resign ourselves to face the other alternative of negotiating with Zaghlul in London.'⁵ As a result, it was necessary to decide in principle whether an invitation could be issued to Zaghlul before any of the outstanding questions had been resolved. The decision was taken by MacDonald and on April 10 a personal letter was sent to Zaghlul in which the Egyptian Prime Minister was invited to London towards the end of June. MacDonald explained in

1. Amos to Kerr, March 31, 1924, FO/141/821(17029).

2. ACK[err] to HE, April 4, 1924, FO/141/821(17029).

3. Allenby, marginal notes to ibid.

4. Allenby to MacDonald, April 6, 1924, Tel. Nos. 86-87, FO/371/10040.

5. W.T[Tyrrell]., Minute, April 6, 1924, to ibid. Murray in a minute to the same cable sought to refute Allenby's arguments and stressed the danger in failure of talks in London. Murray, Minute, 8.4.24, to ibid.

the letter that

I have carefully considered the manner in which these negotiations should be conducted, as I am sincerely anxious that nothing should be left undone which might contribute to their successful outcome. It appears to me that a satisfactory solution of the principal questions at issue can only be reached as a result of personal discussion between ourselves.¹

The Residency had apparently carried the day.

Allenby, relieved by the invitation to Zaghlul, now asked to be 'authorised to tell Zaghlul Pasha that a letter is on its way and to give him an idea of its terms which I assume to be in a general sense conveyed in first paragraph of your telegram and to avoid specific mention of controversial points that might discourage him.'² However, by refusing to carry on preliminary talks before the invitation was extended, Allenby had largely isolated himself from the negotiating process itself. MacDonald informed him that he could tell Zaghlul that a letter was on its way but that he should not disclose its contents 'unless the local situation makes it imperative.'³ Allenby was then instructed to ascertain informally Zaghlul's views on the Sudan and troops but 'On no account should you initiate proposals.'⁴ MacDonald was attempting obviously to avoid a repetition of the events of 1921/22 when Allenby committed the government to a course of action formulated in the Residency.

The refusal to give Allenby the authority he requested and the circumstances surrounding the contents of the letter to Zaghlul are indications of the diminution of Residency influence and the assertion of Foreign Office authority over the negotiations. With regard to the invitation, Allenby was neither consulted about its formulation nor informed of its contents when it was despatched to the Residency for delivery. Kerr commented on this strange procedure:

It [the invitation] has no covering despatch and we are sent no copy & inevitably Zaghlul is given the name Said instead of Saad.

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1. MacDonald to Zaghlul, April 10, 1924, FO/371/10040.
 2. Allenby to MacDonald, April 11, 1924, Tel. No. 94, FO/371/10040.
 3. MacDonald to Allenby, April 14, 1924, Tel. No. 72, FO/371/10040.
 4. Ibid. This sharp note was based on Murray's comments that Allenby should be answered to the effect that 'the minimum requirements of HMG must be decided by the Cabinet.' Murray, Minute, 12.4.24, to Allenby to MacDonald, April 11, 1924, Tel. No. 94, FO/371/10040.

It is a curious way of doing business not to let us have a copy of a document of such importance, but I do not see how we could protest without giving serious offence. We have the Secretary of State's assurance that we rightly summarized his letter in presuming that it was an invitation in general terms & contained no reference to points of controversy.¹

On April 19 Kerr delivered the invitation to Zaghlul who assumed it had been drafted in the Residency. Kerr then tried to draw the Egyptian Prime Minister out on the question of troops and the Sudan. Zaghlul assumed an extreme position on both issues calling for independence for Egypt and total withdrawal of British troops from Egypt. Allenby, however, was not discouraged and informed London that the impression was 'that Zaghlul is deliberately stating his maximum demands in the hope of getting indication of views of His Majesty's Government.'² He was convinced that there would be no change in Zaghlul's attitude 'until I am able with your authority to indicate how far I think His Majesty's Government might be prepared to meet any reasonable demands.'³ He did, however, reassure MacDonald that 'care will of course be taken not to influence His Majesty's Government in any way.'⁴

The Foreign Office strongly resisted this attempt to move the venue of negotiations back to Cairo. Murray again emphasized the importance of maintaining Cabinet authority over substantive issues. With regard to Allenby's request to discuss the limits of British policy, 'this course would be tantamount to conducting locally unofficial negotiations the onus of which the Residency appeared anxious to shift to our shoulders.'⁵ Tyrrell tartly noted that 'In this matter of the conduct of negotiations with Zaghlul, the Cairo Residency seems to me to be as variable as the British climate....I do not think we need pay any more attention to Cairo's suggestions which are subject to such frequent and violent changes, and we had better therefore warn Lord Allenby...'⁶ Allenby was therefore instructed that if British policy was questioned by Zaghlul, 'you should confine

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1. ACK[err] to HE, April 17, 1924, FO/141/821(17029). The Cabinet was in the same position and was not informed formally of the invitation to Zaghlul.
 2. Allenby to MacDonald, April 22, 1924, Tel. No. 109, FO/371/10040.
 3. Allenby to MacDonald, April 22, 1924, Tel. No. 110, FO/371/10040.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Murray, Minute, April 23, 1924, to MacDonald to Allenby, April 30, 1924, Tel. No. 83, FO/371/10040.
 6. W.T[Tyrrell]., Minute, April 24, 1924, to ibid.

yourself to stating that you reported at home his conversation with Mr. Kerr on April 19th and are not authorised to discuss the matter further.'¹

However, somewhat abruptly and in the midst of signs of growing friction between the Foreign Office and the Residency, the first stage, the background to the talks, ended successfully with Zaghlul's acceptance on May 6 of MacDonald's invitation.² Despite the increasing assertiveness of London in policy issues, from the Residency's point of view matters seemed to have come to their desired conclusion. There had been no impasse over the initiative for negotiations and Zaghlul had received an unconditional invitation to London. Allenby was quite optimistic about the future and he wrote to Hayter in London that 'the situation here, since S.Z. came to power, is looking better....Prospects for an agreement are much brighter.'³ This, however, would be proven only by the talks themselves.

The Pinprick Policy

The actual negotiations were preceded by a period of manoeuvring by both sides in an apparent effort to obtain a tactical advantage. For London this meant an attempt to define the parameters of the forthcoming talks so that the reserved points would serve as their bases. Zaghlul, on the other hand, attempted to avoid being committed to the February declaration by negotiations. Against this background, he evolved a 'pin-prick policy' in which diplomatic and administrative pressure was applied in order to give him a freer hand at the bargaining table in London.

Manoeuvring began in earnest after MacDonald's statement in the Commons on May 8 that the forthcoming negotiations were 'being undertaken in pursuance of a policy already approved by Parliament.'⁴ This resulted in a storm in Egypt where it was seen as an attempt to restrict the scope of discussion and to commit the Egyptian government to the reserved points, a course which Zaghlul was forced to publicly repudiate.⁵

1. Ibid.

2. Zaghlul to MacDonald, May 6, 1924, FO/371/10040.

3. Allenby to Hayter, May 6, [1924], STAC, Hayter Papers.

4. J.R. MacDonald, May 8, 1924, Parliamentary Debates, 5th Series, CXCI(1924) 649.

5. Allenby to MacDonald, May 11, 1924, Tel. No. 128, FO/371/10040.

Allenby immediately sought an interview with Zaghlul during which the latter expressed alarm at MacDonald's 'reiterated and in his opinion unnecessary allusion to policy in February declaration.'¹ In fact, Zaghlul, concerned by the uproar in the Egyptian Chamber of Deputies, sent a message to MacDonald through Izzat Pasha in London that there would be no negotiations if his hands were tied and that 'It should be clearly understood in that case that I shall resign office.'²

Although Allenby warned Zaghlul against threats of resignation, he was obviously impressed by Zaghlul's difficulties and his apparent desire to negotiate. Allenby, therefore, reassured Zaghlul that while Britain would not depart from its policy, the negotiations would not be restricted. Zaghlul then asked for such reassurances in a private letter which he and Allenby proceeded to compose stating that the British government 'have no wish to restrict either basis or scope of discussions, and will be ready to enter into a free exchange of opinions.'³ Allenby recommended despatch of the letter since it would satisfy Zaghlul, now apparently a major Residency concern, and because 'I do not think that its wording would in any way weaken your position...'⁴

The Foreign Office, however, was not as impressed with Zaghlul's anxiety as was Allenby. Murray believed that the proposed letter 'would be an error of tactics at this state,' since it 'would encourage him [Zaghlul] to believe that he has merely got to threaten resignation in order to induce the Residency to strain every effort to persuade the Foreign Office to accede to whatever Zaghlul's demands may for the moment be.'⁵ Crowe agreed and commented that 'Lord Allenby was not well-inspired in immediately coming forward with the definite proposal of the pre-conceived letter to Zaghlul, by which he has needlessly committed himself.'⁶ Instead it was decided that when Aziz Izzat Pasha met with MacDonald to deliver

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1. Allenby to MacDonald, May 11, 1924, Tel. No. 129, FO/371/10040.
 2. Allenby to MacDonald, May 12, 1924, Tel. No. 133, FO/371/10040.
 3. Allenby to MacDonald, May 11, 1924, Tel. No. 130, FO/371/10040.
 4. Allenby to MacDonald, May 11, 1924, Tel. No. 129, FO/371/10040.
 5. Murray, Minute, 12.5.24, to Allenby to MacDonald, May 12, 1924, Tel. No. 133, FO/371/10040.
 6. E.A.C[roWE], Minute, May 12, to ibid. Allenby recognised the hastiness of his step and later cabled that he was misunderstood: The letter from MacDonald should not be written on its own but that this was a suitable reply to a letter that might come from Zaghlul. Allenby to MacDonald, May 17, 1924, Tel. No. 146, FO/371/10040.

Zaghlul's message, verbal reassurances would be given and the outline of an agenda sought.

On May 15, MacDonald met with the Egyptian Minister and gave him an aide memoire explaining the British position. He requested an agenda that would give the talks some coherent shape. MacDonald elaborated on this point verbally:

I told him I was much too busy to discuss the 'Egyptian question' without an agenda and that the only use I was making of the Declaration was that it provided an agenda to which we could agree. I handed to him the aide memoire provided by the Foreign Office. He said he would telephone it to Egypt and at the same time request Zaghlul to state what questions he wished to raise. I said that without an agreement upon them it was quite useless trying to begin negotiations.¹

Izzat Pasha returned with Zaghlul's reply on May 19. Instead of dealing with an agenda specifically, Zaghlul stressed 'the fact that the Egyptian Government does not consider itself bound by the unilateral declaration of the 28th February, 1922.'² The Foreign Office was somewhat discouraged by what was seen as Zaghlul's evasiveness. However, while rejecting the validity of the reserved points, Zaghlul did not rule out their discussion.

In the meantime the Residency continued to reassure London of Zaghlul's willingness to negotiate a settlement despite some dissent within his own party. It seemed as if Allenby and his advisers were more concerned with London's attitude towards negotiations than with Zaghlul's. On May 17, Allenby cabled MacDonald of his confidence in Zaghlul's desire to negotiate, adding that 'I earnestly trust His Majesty's Government will leave nothing undone which could encourage and strengthen that intention.'³ Allenby confirmed this concern in a letter to Selby:

Saad Zaghlul is, I believe,...anxious to arrive at an agreement and he is the only man who is capable of carrying it through, if anyone can. He is...very suspicious of H.M.G.'s policy, and it is of first importance that we deal with him in all sincerity and honesty. There must be no finessing, no eye-washing. All must be above board.⁴

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1. J.R. MacDonald, Memorandum, May 15, 1924, FO/371/10041. Also, see: Foreign Office, Aide Memoire, May 15, 1924, FO/371/10040.
 2. Izzat Pasha to MacDonald, May 19, 1924, FO/371/10041.
 3. Allenby to MacDonald, May 17, 1924, Tel. No. 145, FO/371/10040.
 4. Allenby to Selby, May 17, 1924, MacDonald Papers, FO/800/218.

Allenby maintained the pressure for a means to reassure Zaghlul. Both Allenby and Zaghlul still attached great importance to the letter from MacDonald. Given Zaghlul's anxiety, Allenby questioned the wisdom of pursuing the issue of an agenda.

The Foreign Office, however, was now in full charge and Residency advice carried little weight. Rejection of Residency suggestions over the past weeks finally led Tweedy to suggest in exasperation that 'we should tend for the time being to disassociate ourselves from the role of advisors to the Foreign Office. They have shown signs that they do not like our advice though they have not given us anything which can be called a rebuff.'¹ The Foreign Office appeared to agree. Murray believed that Zaghlul was a master political tactician and that the Residency and the Foreign office, like Lord Milner in 1920, might be out-maneuvred:

...from the point of view of H.M.G. early negotiations may be desirable, but for Zaghlul they are essential. He is, however, gradually working round the Residency until in a short time it will be the Residency who are the suitors and Zaghlul who is coyly hanging back.²

It was, therefore, decided to send a long cable to Allenby repeating London's views about the progress of negotiations. MacDonald emphasized his reluctance to modify British policy in advance of negotiations simply to give Zaghlul a tactical victory for public consumption. Allenby, in effect, was being cautioned against continuing his unofficial negotiations.³

Zaghlul meanwhile kept up the pressure and on May 25 declared to the Chamber of Deputies that difficulties had arisen between Egypt and Britain. Only after these had been resolved could negotiations proceed.⁴ Even Allenby was beginning to doubt the seriousness of Zaghlul's difficulties and this was confirmed when on June 3 Zaghlul announced in the Chamber that the problems had been overcome and vaguely alluded to the British position on the Sudan.⁵

Discussions between the Residency and Zaghlul continued intermittently

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1. OMT[weedy] to Furness, May 23, 1924, FO/141/821(17029). Kerr was in London at this time so the Residency point of view would be represented in any event.
 2. Murray, Minute, 26.5.24, to Allenby to MacDonald, May 25, 1924, Tel. Nos. 158-159, FO/371/10041.
 3. MacDonald to Allenby, May 27, 1924, Tel. No. 106, FO/371/10041.
 4. Allenby to MacDonald, May 26, 1924, Tel. No. 160, FO/371/10041.
 5. Allenby to MacDonald, June 8, 1924, Desp. No. 386, FO/371/10041.

through June. Each time a new text for a Foreign Office letter was proposed by the Residency and Zaghlul called for new changes. Foreign Office officials were not surprised at Zaghlul's tactics but were increasingly impatient with Allenby. MacDonald very sharply noted:

We have gone far enough. Zaghloul knows well enough what negotiations mean and he must make his own explanations to his people. These repeated requests are weakness on Lord Allenby's part which may tie us up. Our simple position is: the four points are not agreed and we wish to try and come to an agreement. If Zaghloul wishes to raise others we are willing to listen. That is all.¹

The matter was finally brought to a close by instructing Allenby that he was to discontinue his talks with Zaghlul on the points at issue.²

At the same time that Zaghlul was manoeuvring for position diplomatically, he also applied administrative pressure on the British in Egypt. Until the advent of the new regime, the Tharwat-Scott proces verbal of January 1922 on the status quo served as an interim basis for Egypt's administration. Although there were some deviations, these were not major. However, after Zaghlul became Prime Minister and a Wafd-dominated Parliament met, matters changed. The status quo and previous practices were challenged consistently in areas such as the rights of officials, the position of advisers, the Egyptian service of the Ottoman Tribute Loans and the subvention for the support of the British Army of Occupation in Egypt and the Sudan. This was a logical extension of Zaghlul's view that any agreements made or laws promulgated before the meeting of an elected parliament were invalid. The British, however, saw the situation differently. Amos believed that

So long as the Egyptian government was in the hands of men having some powers of cool judgement, that government could be counted on to display some awareness of the claims and powers of H.M.G. There are unfortunately many indications that with the present parliament and government the maintenance of the status quo is going

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1. J.R.M [MacDonald], Minute, 11/6/24, to Allenby to MacDonald, June 8, 1924, Tel. No. 183, FO/371/10041.
 2. MacDonald to Allenby, June 13, 1924, Tel. No. 118, FO/371/10041. MacDonald expressed the Foreign Office view to Cabinet on June 18: 'Zaghlul Pasha appeared to be manoeuvring for position before committing himself definitely to come to London.' Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 38(24), June 18, 1924, CAB/23/48.

to be increasingly difficult.¹

As early as March 16, Allenby warned London that the new Egyptian government might not meet its obligations to retiring officials as mandated by Law 28.² As a result of British protests and, more importantly, because of the advice of government law officers, the Ministry did not adopt this course.³ The position of those officials remaining in the Egyptian civil service, however, continued to deteriorate. Patterson, the Financial Advisor, soon became their advocate before the government. Still pressure on officials and hence on the Residency continued throughout the period and was a source of growing concern. A few days before Zaghlul's departure from Egypt in July, Allenby sent a long and depressing despatch citing numerous examples of British officials being isolated, their integrity questioned and, generally, being made to feel insecure in their positions.⁴

Another area in which this policy was applied was the State Budget. It was here that the government and the Parliament had their strongest weapon. In April the Ministry made use of this in an effort to amalgamate the budgets of the Financial and Judicial Advisers with their respective ministries as opposed to previous practice. This was protested by the Residency, through Patterson, 'as it clearly represented an attempt to infringe the special positions of the Judicial and Financial Advisers which...form part of the agreement backing up to the Declaration of the 28th February, 1922,'⁵ and the issue was dropped for the meantime. Eventually the Residency had to accede to the step but asked 'for formal assurance that Egyptian Government has no intention of impairing in any way existing powers and privileges of advisers.' There were, however, further attempts to weaken the special position of the advisers and to call into question their independent status. Amos, most concerned with the issue, was convinced that this

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1. Amos to Furness, 17.6.24, FO/141/821(17029).
 2. Allenby to MacDonald, March 16, 1924, Tel. No. 72, FO/371/10018. This was considered to be particularly serious because the law was registered with the League of Nations as an international agreement.
 3. For details and the relevant correspondence, see: Allenby to MacDonald, March 22, 1924, Desp. No. 192, FO/371/10018.
 4. Allenby to MacDonald, July 25, 1924, Desp. No. 480, FO/371/10018. For a detailed unofficial report by Thomas Russell Pasha, Commandant of the Cairo Policy, see: Russell to Murray, August 10, 1924, FO/371/10041.
 5. Allenby to MacDonald, April 26, 1924, Desp. No. 286, FO/371/10040.

was a sign of 'the initiation of a campaign of pin-pricks designed to make their position more difficult.'¹

The difficulties increased in June when the Parliamentary Budget Committee published its report in the press recommending cancellation of the Egyptian subvention for the upkeep of the British Army in Egypt and the Sudan.² Zaghlul refused to modify his government's support for the recommendation because he believed it would legitimise a situation, the continued presence of British troops, which he had always opposed. Allenby was therefore instructed on July 3 to protest the action and 'add that this appears to be one of several deliberate attempts on the part of the Egyptian Government to modify status quo to the detriment of His Majesty's Government in advance of negotiations the initiation of which is consequently rendered more difficult.'³

The last serious attempt to alter previous practice occurred in July when the Egyptian Parliament considered the question of continuing the service of the Ottoman tribute loans of 1855, 1891 and 1894 as guaranteed by the Lausanne Treaty. Zaghlul rejected the validity of the treaty for Egypt and instead asked in the Chamber of Deputies: '...is it expedient to refuse payment?'⁴ This question was important since a refusal would affect the interests of subjects of major powers other than British. Zaghlul, therefore, chose a middle course, namely, to meet the next payment due in July 1924 but to pay future installments into a special account in the National Bank until the question was resolved.⁵

The subject of greatest contention, however, remained the Sudan. Both Britain and Egypt regarded the Sudan with equal concern as is seen from the constant public references to its future. Here, too, pressure was exerted on the British.

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1. Amos to Furness, June 28, 1924, FO/141/429(5308).
 2. Allenby to MacDonald, June 8, 1924, Desp. No. 386, FO/371/10041. For the correspondence over the Army subvention, see: Allenby to MacDonald, June 23, 1924, Desp. No. 412, FO/371/10049. The subvention, which began in 1907, was £E.150,000 out of an estimated cost of £E.747,000 for the British Army in Egypt and the Sudan in 1924/25. These figures were given by Walsh, the Secretary of State for War in reply to a Parliamentary Question asked on August 6, 1924, FO/371/10049.
 3. MacDonald to Allenby, July 3, 1924, Tel. No. 138, FO/371/10049.
 4. Allenby to MacDonald, July 11, 1924, Tel. No. 228, FO/371/10057. For details about the loans and actions taken over them, see: J. Murray, Memorandum: Ottoman Loans Secured on the Egyptian Tribute, June 10, 1925, FO/371/10895.
 5. For the text of the Egyptian government's decision, communicated in a verbal note to the British and French governments, see: Allenby to MacDonald, July 11, 1924, Tel. No. 231, FO/371/10057.

Allenby reported to London on growing Egyptian activity in the region. In May, Sir Lee Stack, Governor-General of the Sudan and Sirdar [Commander] of the Egyptian Army, wrote Allenby that there had been a considerable increase in Egyptian propaganda, which 'has taken the form of overtures to the younger and more impressionable Soudanese, more particularly those in Government employment.'¹

In Egypt Zaghlul continued to assert that he sought 'to secure the complete independence of Egypt and the Sudan,' and there was a great deal of ferment over this issue in Parliament.² Egyptian pressure extended to England where the participation of the Sudan in the Wembley Commercial Exhibit was protested and Izzat Pasha told the members of the Manchester Cotton Association on June 4 that Egyptian control of the Sudan was 'a question of life and death.'³

Matters became more serious with the outbreak of rioting and anti-British demonstrations in the Sudan on June 22 nearly leading to the declaration of martial law. In this troubled atmosphere, Zaghlul declared in Parliament that 'We must proclaim before the whole world before the English as well as others that we have rights over the Sudan and that we hold to realization of these rights.'⁴ He then sent a provocative cable to the Acting Governor-General of the Sudan implying that the British were encouraging an artificial separatist movement and suppressing sincere expressions of loyalty to Egypt by the Sudanese. This same message was transmitted to MacDonald through Izzat Pasha.⁵

1. Stack to Allenby, May 8, 1924 in Allenby to MacDonald, May 23, 1924, Desp. No. 338, FO/371/10049. This was supported by local intelligence reports about the revived League of the White Flag led by a Dinkawi, ex-Egyptian officer, Ali Abd al-Latif, previously imprisoned for sedition. Sudan Monthly Intelligence Report, No. 358, May 1924, FO/371/10039.
2. Zaghlul's statement was made before a meeting of the World Parliamentary Party on April 27. This was one of many statements made at the time, a number of which were to English correspondents for British consumption. Daily News, April 28, 1924. With respect to pressure in Parliament, see Allenby's report on Opposition attempts to discredit Zaghlul over the Sudan: Allenby to MacDonald, June 1, 1924, Desp. No. 366, FO/371/10041.
3. Manchester Guardian, June 5, 1924.
4. Allenby to MacDonald, June 25, 1924, Tel. No. 205, FO/371/10050.
5. For Zaghlul's cable to the Acting Governor-General, see: Allenby to MacDonald, June 27, 1924, Tel. No. 208, FO/371/10050. For the message to MacDonald see: Izzat Pasha to MacDonald, June 27, 1924, in ibid. Just as the Sudanese were being encouraged by the Egyptians to support a link with Egypt, there is evidence that Britain also encouraged the Sudanese to support the continued

In an effort to reassure public and political opinion in Britain and the Sudan and to reaffirm Britain's position before the negotiations, Lord Parmoor told the House of Lords on June 25 that

I want to say in absolutely definite language that His Majesty's Government are not going to abandon the Sudan in any sense whatever. They recognize the obligations which have been taken towards the Sudanese and regard those obligations as of a character which this Government could not abandon without a very serious loss of prestige in all these eastern countries...I intend my language to be quite definite so that there can be no doubt hereafter.¹

This programmatic statement by a Labour Minister was greeted in Britain with almost universal acclaim and, in some quarters, with relief.²

The response in Egypt to Parmoor's comments was at first moderate and restrained. On June 28, however, Zaghlul used the statement as evidence that British policy had not changed under MacDonald and announced his resignation in Parliament. The Residency was convinced that political manoeuvres were behind the act and that 'the ostensible object of Zaghlul's resignation appears to be to free himself from that part of his programme which relates to his entering into negotiations with His Majesty's Government.'³ In this way Zaghlul could free himself from the dilemma whereby negotiations could neither be avoided nor pursued successfully.

British presence in the Sudan. The Sudan government informed the Residency that because of Egyptian propaganda in May, the previous restraint imposed on matters to be negotiated between Britain and Egypt had been removed and the Sudanese 'were invited to express their wishes, with the result that they immediately took the opportunity to dissent from the views freely disseminated by the Egyptian press and officials that natives of the Sudan preferred Egyptian to British rule.' Khartum to Kerr, 15.8.24, No. 195, FO/141/805 (8100). Even the Residency had to comment, 10/8/24, that 'it is a little difficult to resist the impression that this is not quite spontaneous.' *Ibid.*

1. MacDonald to Allenby, June 30, 1924, Tel. No. 133, FO/371/10050. Parmoor was a former Conservative who was brought to the Foreign Office to deal with League of Nations Affairs and was Lord President of the Council.
2. The response in the press was enthusiastic. See the leaders in the following newspapers: Daily Chronicle, June 26, 1924 - 'Egypt and the Sudan'; Daily Mail, July 2, 1924 - 'Why We Mean to Stay in the Sudan'; Daily Telegraph, July 2, 1924 - 'Egypt and the Soudan'; Morning Post, June 27, 1924 - 'A Turning Point'; Manchester Guardian, 'Cairo and Khartoum'; Observer, June 29, 1924 - 'Plain Words to Egypt'; Times, June 27, 1924 - 'Egypt and the Sudan'; and, Westminster Gazette, June 30, 1924 - 'Zaghlul Pasha and the Sudan'.
3. Allenby to MacDonald, June 29, 1924, Tel. No. 217, FO/371/10041.

A day later, however, Zaghlul relented after having obtained the public support of the King and Parliament and he withdrew his resignation.

From this point matters moved quickly. MacDonald made a statement on June 30 in the House of Commons which was considerably more moderate than Parmoor's in tone, if not in content.¹ This was followed by a conciliatory telegram to Allenby for transmission to Zaghlul reviewing recent events. This telegram, which could be made public if Zaghlul so desired, gave the reassurances sought earlier. Zaghlul replied in kind on July 6 and only the date for the negotiations remained to be fixed.²

The road to negotiations, however, was not to be cleared this easily. Before final arrangements could be made, a would-be Egyptian assassin wounded Zaghlul on July 12. Although the wound was not serious, matters were further delayed. In the meantime, MacDonald postponed the meeting with Zaghlul because of the forthcoming Inter-Allied Conference and the pressure of parliamentary business. In fact, MacDonald, discouraged by few signs of success, suggested to Allenby that a preliminary meeting might be held during the summer in France where Zaghlul was going to take the cure.³ There some informal agreement could be sought on the issue of troops and the Sudan, without which talks in London would be fruitless. In any event, MacDonald could not meet with Zaghlul in London before late September. Thus, when Zaghlul sailed for Marseilles on July 25, there was still no clear indication of where and when talks would be held and whether there was any hope for success. There was only Zaghlul's verbal acceptance of late September as a convenient time for a meeting between the two Prime Ministers.⁴ The success of the talks would be known only when the two met.

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1. Parliamentary Question (Mr. Hannon), June 30, 1924, FO/371/10041. MacDonald informed Cabinet that as a result of his statement 'the doors [to negotiations] appear to have reopened.' Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 39(24), July 2, 1924, CAB 23/48.
 2. The correspondence between MacDonald, Allenby and Zaghlul is enclosed in Allenby to MacDonald, July 7, 1924, Desp. No. 446, FO/371/10041.
 3. MacDonald to Allenby, July 14, 1924, Tel. No. 145, FO/371/10041.
 4. Allenby to MacDonald, July 25, 1924, Tel. No. 245, FO/371/10041.

CHAPTER NINE: THE NEGOTIATIONS

Perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of British policy was the formulation of a long-term policy that could serve as a basis for a final settlement. The need for an agreed upon negotiating position in 1924 emphasised, as it had in 1921, the diverse interests within the British establishment. These could be bridged only with difficulty.

This, however, was not readily apparent in the months immediately following Egypt's independence. Since Britain's short term approach was disengagement, long-term views held by different interests within the British government were not questioned seriously. Few debated at this time the Service position that British troops should remain in the vicinity of Cairo and Alexandria. No one seemed to argue against the need to reduce Egyptian influence in the Sudan, and some even believed that British annexation of the Sudan might be desirable.¹

The Debate Over Policy

Although negotiations were not yet imminent, the mechanics of the British presence in Egypt imposed the need for policy decisions. A thorough review of policy could not be postponed for long and basic differences among British policymakers would again become obvious. Thus in 1923, for instance, when the technical question of the construction of troop accommodations arose, this in turn raised the political issue of British troops in Egypt. The hutted and tented camps used by the 12,000 British troops in Egypt were not suitable for further prolonged use. One type of replacement, lasting three to four years, could be erected at a cost of LE.144,000, while another, lasting fifteen to twenty years, would cost LE.420,000. Any determination would obviously involve a political decision on the size of British forces in Egypt, the duration of their stay and their location.

1. The main objections to such a course were economic since the British Exchequer would have to underwrite the Sudan government's deficits without Egyptian assistance. Murray, Minute on the Future of the Sudan, July 4, 1922, FO/371/7734. For attempts to restrict Egyptian influence in the administration of the Sudan, see Curzon to Allenby, April 5, 1922, Desp.No. 394, FO/371/7752.

In February 1923 Lord Derby, the Secretary of State for War, forcefully presented to the Cabinet the Service view that troops in Cairo and Alexandria should not fall much below their present strength.¹ He believed that this was necessary to protect the High Commissioner and his staff, the wireless station at Abu Zabal, the R.A.F. stations at Cairo and Alexandria and the fresh water canal supplying the Suez Canal Zone. The War Office was concerned that positions now abandoned could be reoccupied during a crisis only at great cost and perhaps with difficulty. In addition, there was concern about the possible loss of troop amenities and training grounds without adequate compensation. Derby therefore recommended that the more expensive barracks be built.

The Foreign Office reaction was mixed. Murray felt that of the three alternatives to the War Office approach, namely, withdrawal to Alexandria and environs, to the Canal Zone alone, or to Alexandria and the Canal Zone, the first was most feasible. Despite the disadvantages and loss of prestige involved in any withdrawal, Murray supported a withdrawal to Alexandria with a force of 3,000, as Cromer had recommended in 1883, because Britain controlled the sea and Egypt's independence prevented that country's use as a British military clearing house. Furthermore, he believed that a compact force at Alexandria would be cheaper to maintain than units at Cairo, 150 miles from the nearest port.² Crowe disagreed and Curzon, afraid of a battle in Cabinet, ordered Murray's memorandum on the subject suppressed.³

The discussion over British strategic and political interests could not be so easily resolved. The issues were again debated in the summer of 1923 when it was apparent that the internal situation in Egypt was becoming stable. The forum for the debate was the inter-ministerial Committee of Imperial Defence [CID]. Because of Colonial Office concern over Palestine, Admiralty concern for the safety of the Suez Canal, the General Staff's desire to use Egypt as a major base for the defence of the Canal and the entire region, the Committee agreed on July 12, 1923 that 'the view of the General Staff should prevail that the Suez

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1. D[erby].., The Garrison in Egypt, February 9, 1923, C.P. 89 (23), CAB/24/258.
 2. Murray, Memorandum, February 13, 1923, FO/371/8960. For Cromer's recommendations, see: Cromer to Granville, October 9, 1883 in Parl. Papers, Egypt No. 1 (1884) [C.-3844], pp. 50-51.
 3. E.A.C[roWE].., Minute, February 17, and C[urzon].., Minute, 18/2, to Murray, Memorandum, February 13, 1923, FO/371/8960.

Canal can best be defended from the Sinai Peninsula with a force based on Egypt and with advanced detachments at Rafa and Akaba.'¹

All were agreed that the region was vital to imperial strategy. The question, however, was how British interests should be protected. The ensuing debates in the CID clearly demonstrated the divergence of strategic perceptions, based on departmental functions and interests.

Derby presented a memorandum on July 24 to the Committee carefully outlining the position of the General Staff with its land-based approach.² The War Office was influenced by fear of the possibility of attack from within Egypt ('caused by a sudden uprising of the population, political intrigue on Bolshevik lines or the defection of the Egyptian army'³), the assumed need to protect the Sudan and the Canal through the cooperation of Egypt, as well as general Mediterranean strategy, namely, defence of Iraq and British interests in Turkey. In addition, the War Office was reluctant to give up training facilities not available in Gibraltar and Malta. Derby therefore favoured the retention of large forces in Egypt as currently situated.

The Admiralty, however, did not view Egypt as a British place d'armes for the Middle East. Instead, it was concerned primarily with the Suez Canal as a vital link with Indian Ocean and Australasian shipping. The growth of a possibly unfriendly Japan and the shift of strategic centres to distant Eastern waters turned their attention to the possibility of a blocking attack on the Canal. As a result, Leo Amery, First Lord of the Admiralty, warned the CID that 'While recognising the difficulties which would confront us in attaining a recognised and explicit power of control in the Suez Canal Zone, the naval staff feel policy should be directed towards this end.'⁴

The Foreign Office adopted a third approach. They opposed the War Office call for the more or less permanent occupation of Egypt because of previous

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1. CID, Minutes of 174th Meeting, July 12, 1923, CAB/2/3. This view was presented to the Cabinet in April by Lord Cavan, Commander of the Imperial General Staff: D[erby], Future Size of Our Regular Army, April 17, 1923, C.P. 200(23), CAB/24/159.
 2. D[erby], Military Policy in Egypt, July 24, 1923, CID Paper 439B, CAB/4/10.
 3. Ibid.
 4. CID, Liability of the Suez Canal to Blocking Attack, Note by the First Lord of the Admiralty, L.S.A[merý], July 24, 1923, CID Paper 438B, CAB/4/10.

British disapproval of the long-term occupation of the Ruhr, the fear that Egypt would appeal to the League on this issue, and the desire to reach a political settlement with Egypt. Murray attacked the War Office contention that Egypt was needed to protect the Sudan: 'The view taken in this department has been the precise converse...that as long as we control the Sudan, Egypt is at our mercy.'¹ Lindsay agreed and this formed the basis for a long Foreign Office rebuttal of Derby's position to the CID:

A standing defence scheme for the Suez Canal must take into account political as well as purely military considerations, and it is therefore suggested that the basis for such a scheme should be sought in the perpetuation of effective British control over the Soudan and Palestine and the acquisition of such control over the Sinai peninsula, including, if possible, the Port Said-Suez Railway, pari passu with the progressive withdrawal of the present garrison from the interior of Egypt.²

Finally, the Colonial Office, sensitive to British responsibilities as Mandatory Power in Palestine, opposed the use of the mandated territory for the defence of other British interests in the Middle East. Given the terms of the Palestine Mandate, 'the utilisation of Palestine as a place d'armes either for the defence of the Suez Canal or for general British military purposes in the Middle East is more likely to be challenged....'³

Thus the divergence in departmental interests and responsibilities meant that the General Staff and War Office saw Egypt as the Aldershot of the Middle East and called for the control of the interior; the Admiralty was primarily concerned with the Suez Canal and sought occupation of the Canal Zone; the Foreign Office thought of Egypt in a diplomatic context and, therefore, saw control in terms of the Sudan, Sinai and Palestine; and, the Colonial Office, responsible for the administration of Mandatory Palestine, viewed Egypt, the Canal

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1. J. Murray, Minute, 30.7.23, to D[erby], Military Policy in Egypt, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War, July 24, 1923, CID Paper 439B, in FO/371/8983.
 2. Foreign Office Memorandum respecting Military Policy in Egypt, August 9, 1923, FO/371/8983. This document, written by Murray, subsequently became CID Paper 446B. Allenby was consulted on its composition and minuted: 'I am in complete agreement with the memorandum.' Ibid.
 3. CID, Colonial Office Memorandum, Military Policy in Egypt, August 31, 1923, CID Paper 448B, CAB/4/10. The memorandum notes that while the Mandate for Syria and Lebanon permits the stationing of troops for its defence, no such provision is included in the Palestine Mandate.

Zone and Sinai as the basis for defence.

Debate in the CID continued into the autumn. It was temporarily resolved at a meeting on October 2. Lord Derby stated the War Office position and was supported by Lord Cavan, CIGS, who had the agreement of General Congreaves, former GOC of Egypt and the latter's successor, General Haking.¹ Amery now agreed with the War Office position even though he felt that unnecessary diplomatic friction with Egypt should be avoided. Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for Air, agreed with the other Services since 'Egypt was vital to air communications of the Empire.'² Curzon's was the only voice calling for some withdrawal from the interior and a reduction in troops.

The Service view generally prevailed and the Committee recommended that:

- (i) The vital requirements of imperial defence were the Canal, the aerial establishments at Heliopolis (near Cairo) and Abukir (near Alexandria) and the wireless station at Abu Zabal (near Cairo);
- (ii) from a military viewpoint, it was vital to have a force within striking distance of Cairo and Alexandria;
- (iii) maintenance of troops in Cairo and Alexandria, though desirable, was not vital;
- (iv) given military and diplomatic considerations, the best course in negotiations would be to have British troops stationed in barracks near Cairo and Alexandria and in return to relinquish the barracks actually in the cities;
- (v) the size and eventual location of the garrison and air force were reserved for further consideration.³

The Cabinet that considered the CID recommendations confirmed the isolation of Curzon and the Foreign Office on this issue. Conclusions (i) and (ii), affirming the strategic importance of troops in the interior, were adopted, while conclusions (iii) and (iv), reflecting Foreign Office concern over diplomatic difficulties, were reserved for further consideration. Curzon warned the Cabinet that 'he anticipated great difficulty in carrying them into effect in his future negotiations with the Egyptian Government. The opposition in Egypt might even involve a rising against the British troops.'⁴

1. CID, Minutes of the 176th Meeting, October 2, 1923, CAB/2/4.

2. Ibid.

3. This paraphrase of the recommendations is based on: S[alisbury], Military Policy in Egypt, October 8, 1923, C.P. 414(23), CAB/24/162.

4. Cabinet Minutes, October 15, 1923, Cabinet 48(23), CAB/23/46.

With the change in government in Britain and Egypt in early 1924, the debate on the British position underwent a qualitative change. Consideration by the CID of specific proposals, such as troop strengths and locations, was irrelevant in the face of Zaghlul's maximalist demands for Egypt's independence and a total British withdrawal. Zaghlul's attitude simplified matters and polarised the issues under consideration. As defined by Zaghlul, it was no longer a question of the number of British troops in Egypt, but whether there should be any at all; it was not a question of sharing authority in the Sudan, but whether or not Britain remained there. The effect of this was to focus attention on the general areas of British policy interests rather than on their specific content.

Movement in this direction was apparent in the first weeks of MacDonald's ministry. On February 4, 1924, the CID once again considered British strategic interests in Egypt. Comments by the new Chairman, the Lord Chancellor, Viscount Haldane, indicated the changed atmosphere. In contrast with previously detailed and sharp statements, 'Lord Haldane expressed doubts as to whether the committee could do more than recommend to the Prime Minister that it is essential to protect the canal, and that Cairo was the most convenient place for the garrison to secure this desideratum.'¹ The Committee produced a conclusion that tentatively expressed Haldane's sentiments.² The Cabinet, however, only approved a minor proposal dealing with troop movements and delayed decision on the more detailed recommendations.³ Although there was an awareness that the two major points of friction would be the Sudan and troops, there was no specific position taken beyond no abandonment and no total withdrawal.⁴

A British Negotiating Position

The first serious consideration of a negotiating position came in April after the preliminary manoeuvring over an invitation had ended. In response to London's request for suggestions, Kerr, Amos, Furness and Tweedy met and agreed

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1. CID, Minutes of the 180th Meeting, February 4, 1924, CAB/2/4.
 2. M.P.A. Hankey, Egypt, April 16, 1924, C.P. 260(24), CAB/24/166.
 3. Approval was given for the withdrawal from Egypt of one brigade of field artillery. Cabinet Minutes, February 4, 1924, Cabinet 9(24), CAB/23/47.
 4. Tyrrell to Kerr, March 6, 1924, FO/371/10059.

that the claim to protect foreigners and minorities would probably be dropped and that British interests would centre on the Sudan and troops. On the first issue, there seemed to be 'no question of the surrender of that territory to Egypt or the recognition of Egyptian sovereignty to the exclusion of British influence and control', and on the second, Kerr felt that the British government 'would agree to a withdrawal in the direction of the Canal.'¹ Allenby summarised this position in a cable to London on April 6 as 'Effective military control of the Suez Canal', and 'Maintenance of a predominant political and administrative control of Soudan', being his understanding of the irreducible requirements of the British government.²

At the same time, the Foreign Office was also examining the options open to the government. On April 7 Murray circulated a memorandum on the four reserved points, essentially a revised version of his earlier memorandum suppressed by Curzon. It became clear that if the protection of minorities and foreigners was dropped, the four points could be reduced to two major areas: the future of the Sudan and defence of strategic interests or troops.

With respect to the Sudan, there seemed little room for debate as 'the farthest limit to which His Majesty's Government can safely go to meet Egyptian demands...consists in a reaffirmation of the Anglo-Egyptian condominium...as defined by the Boutros-Cromer Convention of 1899.'³ The question of troops, however, was far more complex. The results of the 1921 negotiations seemed to prove to Murray that no treaty was possible if British troops remained in Cairo or the nearby region. Thus, the disadvantages of withdrawal, whether to Alexandria, to the Canal, or to both, had to be weighed against the advantages of concluding a treaty. This, however, was a political decision which Murray, with Tyrrell's approval, left for the Cabinet.⁴

Despite the need for a Cabinet decision to define the specifics of a British position, none was forthcoming. When the Cabinet met on May 1 to consider the

1. A.C.K[err], to H.E., March 29, 1924, FO/141/821(17029).
2. Allenby to MacDonald, April 6, 1924, Tel. No. 88, FO/371/10040.
3. Foreign Office, Memorandum on Anglo-Egyptian Negotiations, April 7, 1924, FO/371/10040.
4. Murray, Minute, 8/4/24, to Allenby to MacDonald, April 6, 1924, Tel. No. 88, FO/371/10040. The Residency felt that Murray overestimated the value of troops: 'The presence of the troops in Cairo is now really more of an embarrassment than anything else.' A.C.K[err], to H.E., April 25, 1924, FO/371/821(17029).

situation, they were informed by MacDonald that 'it would not be possible for Great Britain to evacuate the Sudan and to disinterest herself in that region,' and 'that a very great military problem arose out of the desire of the Egyptian Government for the evacuation of Cairo by the British forces.'¹ No decision, however, was taken on the details of a negotiating position, nor could there be one in the current circumstances.

The only area in which there eventually was some movement was the Sudan. This, however, was not so much an attempt to establish a viable negotiating position. It was more an effort to define through diplomatic means the Sudan's status in such a way that Egypt's influence would be diminished. In this connection, Sir Lee Stack, the Governor-General of the Sudan, submitted to Allenby a long memorandum on the future of the Sudan. Stack saw three alternatives: the removal of British control and annexation of the Sudan by Egypt; maintenance of the status quo; and, increased British control. In view of recent events and uncertainty in the region, Stack argued that 'the predominance of British control in the actual administration of the country should be defined more clearly and established more securely.'² Alarmed by increasing Egyptian activity, the Residency and the Foreign Office both agreed with Stack's approach and there were suggestions that his proposal might have to be imposed unilaterally if negotiations failed.³

Support for a firm stand in the Sudan was so widespread that it would have been difficult to take any other position. The Treasury, concerned about Britain's guarantee of Sudan loan totalling LE.8,540,000 in principal and LE.755,200 per annum in interest, favoured stability through Britain's continued control of the area.⁴ The King was concerned because 'His Majesty considers that if there is any good in the country it is due to the sacrifice of British lives and

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1. Cabinet Minutes, May 1, 1924, Cabinet 29(24), CAB/23/48.
 2. Stack to Allenby, May 25, 1924, No. 69, in Allenby to MacDonald, June 1, 1924, FO/371/10042. Stack followed this highly specific memorandum with a note to MacDonald in August. Stack to MacDonald, August 11, 1924, No. 141L, FO/371/10045.
 3. For responses along these lines by Allenby, MacDonald and Murray, see: Allenby to MacDonald, June 29, 1924, Desp. No. 423, FO/371/10050; and, J. Murray, 6/8/24, and J.R.M., 11/8/24, Minutes to Allenby to MacDonald, July 26, 1924, Desp. No. 481, FO/371/10051.
 4. O.E. Niemeyer (Treasury) to Foreign Office, July 3, 1924, FO/371/10050; and, Niemeyer to Foreign Office, August 24, 1924, FO/371/10052.

British money.'¹ The Australian Prime Minister informed MacDonald that 'it is imperative in order to ensure peace and prosperity in that country that the present predominance should be maintained...'² Finally, in the months that preceded the negotiations there was a constant stream of delegations and petitions ranging from Lancashire cotton workers to various business interests calling on the government to protect British interests in the Sudan.³

A final attempt to summarise a British position was made by Allenby at the end of July. Shortly before he left Egypt on home leave, Allenby sent a despatch urging a progressive withdrawal from Cairo and then Alexandria towards the Suez Canal, on the one hand, and the abandonment of most of Britain's traditional rights in Egypt, on the other. In effect, Allenby advocated the abandonment of Egypt to her own devices, only securing Britain's vital strategic interests. This was urged in the belief that Egypt

...is debauched by indiscipline and in its pursuit of liberty is oblivious of justice. Its political leaders are men who will have great difficulty in steering between excessive oppression and excessive complaisance to popular sentiment and most of whom are full of bitter personal and party hatreds, while even those high officials who conscientiously wish to carry on an efficient administration are hampered by an ignorance - in matters, for example, of finance and science - of whose depths they are wholly unconscious. The populace, in spite of a certain affability of temper, is rendered docile chiefly by fear, and when fear is removed, they, like their betters, are naturally prone to violence. They are not conspicuously fanatical, but easily roused, especially in Alexandria, to xenophobia, and when roused they delight in the worst excesses.⁴

The only thing in which Allenby appeared interested was that Britain be in a

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1. Lord Stamfordham to Crowe, March 31, 1924, FO/371/10040.
 2. Masterton Smith (Colonial Office) to Foreign Office, June 19, 1924, FO/371/10041.
 3. In early June a deputation of representatives of Lancashire cotton interests attempted to see MacDonald to express the concern of masters and men over the Sudan. C.P. Duff (Downing Street) to Selby, June 9, 1924, FO/371/10031. Similar expressions of concern were received with great frequency. For example: London Chamber of Commerce to MacDonald, June 13, 1924, FO/371/10050; Liverpool Chamber of Commerce to Foreign Office, June 18, 1924, FO/371/10050; Keilly (Empire Cotton Growing Corporation) to Murray, June 18, 1924, FO/371/10049; National Union of Manufacturers to MacDonald, June 25, 1924, FO/371/10050; Manchester Chamber of Commerce to MacDonald, July 7, 1924, FO/371/10050; and, Manchester Association of Importers and Exporters, July 25, 1924, FO/371/10050.
 4. Allenby to MacDonald, July 28, 1924, Desp. No. 486, FO/371/10042.

position to intervene as in 1882, if and when the day of reckoning came.

By the time Zaghlul sailed for France and Allenby returned to England, there still was no clearly defined negotiating position. Given Zaghlul's claims and the uncertainty about the nature of the negotiations, this was not surprising.

Disturbances in the Sudan

The weeks before the Zaghlul-MacDonald conversations were marked by disturbances in the Sudan and growing acrimony between the British and Egyptian governments. Zaghlul's statements on the Sudan in May and June, on the one hand, and Parmoor's and MacDonald's, on the other, were followed by an upsurge of pro-Egyptian activity in the region. The Sudan Intelligence Service was particularly concerned by the activities of Egyptian troops, officials and the press, linking them to agitation by the League of the White Flag in the Sudan. There was suspicion, but no proof, of Egyptian support, advice and financing for anti-British agitation.¹

The threatened outbreak came on August 10 when the cadets of the Khartoum Military School marched through the town brandishing rifles and shouting slogans.² The mob that gathered was quickly dispersed and the cadets were peacefully disarmed and arrested by British troops which had cordoned off the School. A day later, a far more serious outbreak of violence occurred at Atbara, where ~~one and a half companies of an~~ Egyptian Railway Battalion rioted and caused much damage. The situation was viewed with gravity by the Sudan authorities. British units and a company of dismounted Arab Mounted Infantry were rushed to the scene since Egyptian troops were now believed to be unreliable. The Egyptian Railway Battalion was surrounded and fired upon after provocation, leaving eighteen rioters wounded and four dead. The Arab Infantry were the only troops in the area at the time and fired without orders.

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1. See: Sudan Monthly Intelligence Report, No. 359, June 1924, No. 360, July 1924, and No. 361, August 1924, FO/371/10039.
 2. For a general report of events in the Sudan, see: W. Sterry to Kerr, August 21, 1924, in Kerr to MacDonald, August 31, 1924, Desp. No. 557, FO/371/10053. For a diary of the outbreaks, see: Account of Events Connected with Pro-Egyptian Propaganda in Various Parts of the Sudan During August, 1924, in Sudan Monthly Intelligence Report, No. 361, August 1924, Appendix, FO/371/10039. In addition there were ongoing reports to London, based on reports from British officials in the Sudan.

Muhammad Said Pasha, the acting Prime Minister, reacted initially with concern and disapproval.¹ He became hostile after the local press, Members of Parliament, students and urban crowds expressed outrage over the 'bloody measures of retaliation' against Egyptians and Sudanese demonstrating for an end to 'oppressive and exclusive British control.'² Muhammad Said blamed the British for the deteriorating situation and requested a joint Anglo-Egyptian Commission of Enquiry into the shootings. On August 15 the Egyptian government issued a communique which was correct in tone and accurate in detail, with one notable exception - there was no mention of any troops in the area other than British.³ Kerr protested to the Egyptian government that this 'gross perversion of facts' gave the impression that it was the British troops who inflicted the casualties, but this was of little use.⁴

In London, sentiment over the Sudan was fast hardening. As early as August 13 MacDonald told his advisers that 'he felt that the time had come to speak plainly to the Egyptian Government'. He instructed Kerr to warn Muhammad Said, 'in the most explicit manner', that the British saw themselves and the Sudan government responsible for security in the region.⁵ MacDonald was convinced that 'Agitation from Egypt alone is responsible for the trouble and we must do nothing to weaken confidence in the Sudan or give away our position there.'⁶ A series of notes passed between the Egyptian legation in London and the Foreign Office which brought the issue no closer to resolution but left MacDonald outraged at

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1. Muhammad Said privately expressed his regret to Kerr over the events. Kerr to MacDonald, August 11, 1924, Tel. No. 263, FO/371/10051.
 2. Kerr to MacDonald, August 13, 1924, Tel. No. 267, FO/371/10051.
 3. For text, see: Kennard (Rome) to MacDonald, August 18, 1924, Desp. No. 718, FO/371/10052.
 4. Kerr to MacDonald, August 15, 1924, Tel. No. 276, FO/371/10051. For the Egyptian reply, see: Kerr to MacDonald, August 17, 1924, Desp. No. 518, FO/371/10052.
 5. These views were expressed by MacDonald at an emergency conference which was attended by Allenby, Stack, Schuster (Sudan government), Selby and Murray. Record of Conference Held in the Room of the Secretary of State at the Foreign Office on August 13th at 11 a.m., FO/371/10051. Kerr received his instructions in MacDonald to Kerr, August 14, 1924, Tel. No. 158, FO/371/10051.
 6. Ibid.

their language and insulting manner of delivery.¹

Against a background of anger and growing doubts about negotiations,² MacDonald wrote to Zaghlul on August 23, ostensibly to confirm the latter's visit to London at the end of September. In fact, the letter was a stern rebuke to Zaghlul and his government over events in the Sudan and the subsequent statements. MacDonald claimed that the violence was 'the direct outcome of persistent propaganda engineered and financed from Egypt and designed to create disorder and embarrass the Sudan Government.'³ Furthermore, the Egyptian government's 'bad faith' and responses 'disappointed any hope that I was dealing with honest men set upon pursuing a peaceful settlement by straightforward and honourable means.'⁴ MacDonald warned that such an approach would not intimidate but instead stiffen the British government.

The negotiations were again in serious danger of collapse. According to the Egyptians in London, time and place were the issue and, according to Muhammad Said, the various British notes to Egypt and MacDonald's letter to Zaghlul were the cause.⁵ In any event, Zaghlul replied on August 29 denying all the charges against his government. He concluded by stating that:

The contemplated negotiations cannot take place - but it is necessary to dissipate this thick fog which hinders honest men from seeing and recognising other honest men. For this I hold myself at your disposition with the object of a full and complete explanation, the result of which will be, I am convinced, to help in the re-establishment of that reciprocal good will without which nothing just or lasting can be undertaken.⁶

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1. Particularly insulting was a note delivered by the Third Secretary of the Legation to Crowe. Muhammad Fahmi Husayn Bey to MacDonald, August 16, 1924, FO/371/10051.
 2. For doubts expressed in the press, see leaders in: Times, August 13 and 16, 1924; Manchester Guardian, August 14, 1924; Morning Post, August 14, 1924; and, Westminster Gazette, August 14, 1924. For MacDonald's doubts, see: MacDonald to Kerr, August 23, 1924, Tel. No. 165, FO/371/10052.
 3. MacDonald to Zaghlul, August 23, 1924, FO/371/10051.
 4. Ibid.
 5. For a report on an interview with the Egyptian minister, see: W.T[yrell]., Minute, 27/8.[1924], FO/371/10042. For Muhammad Said Pasha's views, see: Kerr to MacDonald, August 30, 1924, Tel. No. 294, FO/371/10042.
 6. Zaghlul to MacDonald, August 29, 1924, FO/371/10053.

MacDonald responded positively on September 6 and Zaghlul then informed him that he would arrive in London on September 23.¹

The Negotiations

The negotiations had come full circle. The early basis for the relationship between the two men had been friendship. The hope for successful negotiations between their governments rested on that assumed friendship. However, the preliminary stages of the negotiations, events and the opposing positions, had destroyed any real possibility of successful talks. Now only informal 'conversations' could be held to restore the relationship that had formed the basis for negotiations and high hopes of success in the first place. This did not augur well for the resolution of the current Anglo-Egyptian difficulties nor for a final settlement.

Given this situation, the Foreign Office still made no serious attempt to define a negotiating position. On September 20, Murray circulated a memorandum indicating the major questions likely to be raised during the conversations: the Sudan; protection of imperial communications; service of the Ottoman Tribute Loans; foreign officials in Egypt; protection of foreign interests; and, the position of the High Commissioner. Murray's intent, however, was to outline areas of discussion and not to propose solutions. His advice was that MacDonald await Zaghlul's proposals rather than offer any of his own.

Lord Milner in 1920 and Lord Curzon in 1921 were manoeuvred into the position of placing proposals before Zaghlul and Adly respectively. In each case the result was the same. The Egyptians rejected the offers, but managed nonetheless to secure the concessions without conceding anything in return. The Department venture to urge that in light of these experiences it is most important that Zaghlul should be induced to come forward with proposals, and that until he produces some that are really adequate we should confine ourselves to the role of critic.²

Finally, MacDonald met with Ponsonby, his Under-Secretary of State, Tyrrell, Stack, Schuster, Selby and Murray on September 23 to discuss the British position. No formal conclusions resulted from the meeting, but the conversation

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1. MacDonald to Zaghlul, September 6, 1924, FO/371/10053; and, Zaghlul to MacDonald, September 11, 1924, FO/371/10042.
 2. J. Murray, Memorandum on the Forthcoming Conversations with Zaghlul Pasha, September 20, 1924, FO/371/10042.

indicated the lines along which MacDonald was thinking. The two major topics were the security of imperial communications and the Sudan. MacDonald believed that the present British position in both cases was intolerable. With regard to the British garrison in Egypt, he felt that it was anomalous that British soldiers patrolled the capital of an independent state. He, therefore, 'had been thinking that the time had come for withdrawing from this responsibility and confining the duty of British troops in Egypt to the protection of the Canal and also of our imperial air communications.'¹ As for the Sudan, MacDonald said that the object, if possible, was to find some solution whereby Britain would retain control of the area and yet enable him to make concessions to the Egyptians. The difficulty was that MacDonald and his advisers were talking of concession in a negotiating context, while Zaghlul at first had called for the abandonment of the entire British position, and now agreed only to informal 'conversations'.²

The first meeting between MacDonald and Zaghlul was held on September 25 with Selby, Murray, Hamid Mahmud and Kamil Salim Bey present. After agreeing that the first session would be 'a general and non-committal talk', the discussion deteriorated into recriminations about recent events in the Sudan and who bore responsibility for the situation.³ The meeting ended without any conclusion and a further session was agreed upon.

The divergent perceptions of the nature and expected outcome of the conversations indicated the difficulties ahead. Selby reflected the British view that, whatever they were called, the meetings were more or less formal negotiations. In a letter to Kerr, two days after the first session, he reported that:

...We have had one long meeting with him[Zaghlul], at which he showed his usual slipperiness, and I am not confident that we shall be able to pin him to anything that we can consider. On the other hand, the Prime Minister's handling of him is quite admirable, he showed himself, at the first interview, firm and very patient. In fact an admirable negotiator with Orientals. But, of course, his time is too

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1. Record of Conference held at 10 Downing Street on Tuesday, September 23rd, at 10 a.m., FO/371/10042.
 2. In this connection Tyrrell informed the War Office that 'so far as can be foreseen, the conversations will be of an informal and purely preliminary nature, and it is not proposed to discuss any matters of detail, which will be reserved for formal negotiations later - if they ever materialise.' Tyrrell to J.B. Crosland (War Office), September 25, 1924, FO/371/10042.
 3. Record of a Conference Held at 10 Downing Street on September 25, 1924 at 10.30 a.m., FO/371/10042.

fully occupied to allow that to continue indefinitely, and I think he has made up his mind to clinch matters on Monday, in other words, to inform Zaghlul that unless he is prepared to put forward proposals as regards the Sudan, which he could regard as reasonable, there is nothing more to be said and it would be useless to discuss the question of Egypt.¹

Zaghlul viewed the situation otherwise and later complained that he had come to London expecting to have private talks with MacDonald alone. Then

Imagine my surprise...when I found Ramsay MacDonald surrounded by a whole host of rigid Foreign Office officials and advisers, indicating that formal conversations were about to be opened. In the presence of this official atmosphere, I was left no option but to state the whole Egyptian case forthwith, and as Ramsay MacDonald had the Sudan at the top of his agenda, I knew that the door was immediately closed on any hope of fruitful discussions. An impasse had been reached before we started.²

Still MacDonald persisted and wrote to Zaghlul immediately after the first session asking that he, Zaghlul, formulate specific proposals which would reconcile Egyptian claims with British responsibilities. He added a note warning, in this connection, that

It is absolutely impossible for me to agree to any proposal which would interfere with the fulfillment of the obligations undertaken by the British government towards the inhabitants of the Sudan or prevent us safeguarding the continuity of the policy of internal development and pacification for which we have been responsible for so long and with such success.³

In addition, MacDonald asked the CID for technical advice regarding the strategic feasibility of a withdrawal to the Canal so that concessions could be offered to Egypt.⁴

Zaghlul, however, balked. He was unwilling to have the talks formalised by

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1. Selby to Kerr, September 27, 1924, MacDonald Papers, FO/800/218.
 2. Zaghlul made these comments to Delaney after the failure of the talks. Delaney to Wavell, May 21, 1940, KAP.
 3. MacDonald to Zaghlul, September 25, 1924, FO/371/10042.
 4. J.R.M. [MacDonald], Draft Minute by the Prime Minister, September 26, 1924, FO/371/10042. There were no consultations in Cabinet, and MacDonald only reported to Cabinet on the talks and his note to the Committee of Imperial Defence on September 29. Cabinet Minutes, September 29, 1924, Cabinet 51(24), CAB/23/48.

an agenda, perhaps out of fear that within such a context he, too, would have to make concessions which might be difficult to defend in Egypt. He therefore informed MacDonald that these proposals were not in accordance with the terms of their earlier correspondence in which 'It was understood between us that negotiations were to be free and unrestricted, and the fact of entering them should in no way prejudice Egyptian rights.'¹ He stated categorically that 'it will be absolutely impossible for me to negotiate upon the basis and subject to the restrictions outlined in your letter.'²

The second session took place on this note on October 1. Zaghlul claimed that MacDonald's request was unfair since he could not honestly formulate proposals and take the British position into consideration at the same time. Once this hurdle was overcome, Zaghlul refused to discuss the sensitive issue of the Sudan and argued that logically Egypt should be the first point. He outlined what he considered an acceptable settlement: withdrawal of British forces from all of Egypt; withdrawal of the Financial and Judicial Advisers; an end to all British control over the Egyptian government and the abandonment of the claim to protect the Suez Canal. This Zaghlul described as 'an Egypt for the Egyptians.'³ In return, Zaghlul agreed to a special treaty of alliance with Britain. After some initial hesitation by Zaghlul, both sides arranged to have Murray and Hamid Mahmud meet after the third session of the talks to work out details of a draft treaty that would not commit either side. The Sudan had not been seriously discussed.

There was an atmosphere of uncertainty after the second session. The lack of information on the progress of the talks led the Times to complain that '...Parliament and the nation are as completely in the dark as ever they were under the old diplomacy.'⁴ MacDonald met the CID on October 2, to discuss Britain's strategic needs in light of the talks and it was apparent that the uncertainty was widespread: 'He assured the Committee that there was no need to be nervous, as suggested in the newspapers recently; the position was precisely

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1. Zaghlul to MacDonald, September 26, 1924, FO/371/10042.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Record of the Second Conference held at 10 Downing Street on September 29, 1924 at 5:00 p.m., FO/371/10042. For another description of this session, see: MacDonald to Kerr, October 1, 1924, Tel. No. 185, FO/371/10042.
 4. Times, October 1, 1924.

what it had been before the conversations, and as regards his public declaration concerning the Sudan, he had no intention whatsoever of departing from it.'¹ MacDonald then asked the Committee to consider how British strategic interests could best be secured if the status quo was abandoned. He was afraid that the maintenance of the status quo would cause the talks to break down leading possibly to disturbances: 'Thus very much the same situation might arise in Egypt as was now occurring in India, where a strike was taking place in the Government offices themselves.'² Disturbances would, in MacDonald's opinion, eventually result in the annexation and some form of Crown Colony status for Egypt.

Despite Allenby's support for a gradual withdrawal to the Canal after an agreement was ratified, the Service Chiefs were largely unmoved. They reaffirmed the position they took the previous year, namely, that the most that could be conceded was withdrawal to the outskirts of Cairo and Alexandria. The only conclusion reached by the Committee, therefore, was that the Service heads would continue to examine strategic needs in Egypt in light of the developing political situation. MacDonald still did not have specific details from the CID which could be used during his next meeting with Zaghlul.

The final session of the conversations took place on October 3. The discussion centred on whether there was a need for British troops to defend the Canal or whether Egypt was capable of defending it alone. This debate went to the heart of the issue between MacDonald and Zaghlul. It was not a question of how many and where British troops should remain, but whether or not there should be any troops in Egypt. Both side restated their positions and then Zaghlul abruptly ended the discussions. He told MacDonald that:

...he saw that the Prime Minister was overwhelmed with work. For his part the climate here did not suit his health. He had no wish to increase the Prime Minister's labours, and he was thinking of leaving England in seven or eight days, especially as his own Parliament would be opening next month....Zaghlul thanked the Prime Minister sincerely and regretted that they had failed to reach a definite settlement, but to do so would take a great deal of work of which the Prime Minister's time would not admit.³

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1. CID, Minutes of the 188th Meeting, October 2, 1924, CAB/2/4.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Record of the Third Conference held at 10 Downing Street on October 3, 1924 at 10 a.m., FO/371/10043.

The conversations ended on a final note of mutual recriminations over default of the service of the Ottoman Tribute and the conditions of foreign officials in the Egyptian Civil Service thus ending the 'great expectations' that had been so hopefully entertained in January 1924.

CHAPTER TEN: ALLENBY'S DECLINE

London's Ascendancy

In retrospect, the failure of the MacDonald-Zaghlul conversations was almost inevitable. Zaghlul's maximalist demands and the limitations on MacDonald's negotiating position meant that there was little room for negotiation or compromise. Only acceptance or rejection was possible. Within this context, ^{minor} concessions by MacDonald in return for a guarantee of minimum British interests in Egypt would not work.

Despite the early friendship between the two men and the declared sympathy between their respective parties, orthodoxy on Egypt, as in many other areas of foreign affairs, was the basis of MacDonald's policy. This general approach was apparent from the Labour government's earliest days. Sidney Webb's wife, Beatrice, wrote as early as January 18, 1924, that 'Sidney came away feeling that the Cabinet would err on the side of respectability - too many outsiders and too many peers.'¹ MacDonald was constrained by his government's minority position, a desire to prove himself and the need to prove Labour's respectability, whether in the selection of his Cabinet or the formulation of foreign policy. With the exception of the Labour Party's approach towards Russia, MacDonald, the pragmatist, attempted and largely succeeded in maintaining the continuity of foreign policy rather than making the anticipated radical break with tradition.² Equally important, MacDonald reasserted London's primacy in policy formulation.

As noted, MacDonald's orthodoxy was apparent in his policy towards Egypt.

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1. Margaret Cole (ed.), Beatrice Webb's Diaries, 1912-1924 (London, 1952), I, 263. A few weeks later, on February 8, 1925, Beatrice Webb recorded in her diary that 'Of course these Labour men are new brooms and they have no "silly pleasures," and, on the whole, they are aware of their own ignorance and desperately anxious to "make good."' Do., Beatrice Webb's Diaries, 1924-1932 (London, 1956), II, 4. Lyman described the Labour government as 'just such a mixture. Tories, and some Labourites, though they saw a tendency to favour the intellectuals at the expense of the trade unionists.' Lyman, op.cit., p. 103.
 2. Apparently Baldwin grew closer to MacDonald, proposed a truce on foreign policy and was consulted throughout 1924. During the October 1924 crisis, Baldwin told Stamfordham that 'He [Baldwin] likes and trusts the Prime Minister and has had from time to time interesting talks with him....' Middlemas, op. cit., p. 268.

Although he was willing to make greater concessions than his predecessors, MacDonald still refused to concede British control over the Sudan on the basis of Britain's imperial interests in Egypt. His despatch to Allenby, October 7, 1924, intended for publication, summarised the conversations with Zaghlul and the British position in such a way as to reassure the British public that their interests were secure in Labour's hands.¹ The overwhelmingly favourable response of the press to this despatch indicated that MacDonald had indeed succeeded.²

MacDonald also succeeded in re-establishing London's authority over the Residency in Cairo. At the start there was some friction between London and Cairo, particularly over the early stages of the negotiations. However, once the focus moved from Cairo to London, influence over policy formulation by the already weakened Residency further diminished.

There were several reasons for these developments. As Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, MacDonald had a virtually free hand in foreign affairs. Although the Cabinet was informed periodically about general policy, it often had little voice in its specific formulation. After the defeat of the Labour government in November 1924, Sidney Webb wrote in this connection that the Cabinet

was seldom troubled by MacDonald with foreign affairs. On the latter subject, the practice was for the P.M., perhaps every few weeks, to take occasion to explain in frank but general terms the problems he was dealing with, the difficulties he was encountering and the prospects of success. His exposition might be followed by a few questions and comments, but there was practically no discussion. This was largely due to the common lack of information.³

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1. MacDonald to Allenby, October 7, 1924, Desp. No. — , FO/371/10043.
 2. A survey of the press shows that there was widespread feeling that the government had behaved responsibly. For examples, see: Daily Chronicle, Manchester Guardian, Morning Post and Times, October 8, 1924.
 3. Webb wrote this memorandum shortly after the fall of the first Labour government. Sidney Webb, 'The First Labour Government,' Pol.Qly., XXXII, 1 (Jan.-Mar. 1961), p. 20. Webb's view was confirmed by Beatrice who wrote in her diary on March 31, 1924, that '...MacDonald remains "the mystery man" to all his colleagues - who know little or nothing of his thinkings or doings. Certainly neither Henderson, Clynes, Sidney nor any other member of his Cabinet (possibly Thomas) are in his confidence either with regard to Foreign Affairs or Parliamentary or electoral tactics...' Cole, op.cit., II, 20. Lord Morrison later noted that 'Ramsay MacDonald, by the time he became Prime Minister, was already showing evidence of that remote and defensive attitude to those around him which in the end left him with virtually no friends in the real sense of the word.' Lord [Herbert] Morrison, Herbert Morrison: An Autobiography (London, 1960), p.99.

The situation was much the same at the Foreign Office. Selby, MacDonald's Principal Private Secretary, wrote to Kerr in the midst of the Egyptian negotiations that

In the present state of affairs there is only one director and controller of our policy, and that is the Prime Minister. The rest look on simply assisting in what they are called upon to do. By these methods he has really achieved wonders in Europe up to the present, and I cannot help but feel that he may be equally successful as regards Egypt.¹

MacDonald's control of Egyptian affairs was also made easier by the fact that, once his authority was imposed and Allenby returned to Britain in the summer of 1924, relations between the two men improved. Selby claims to have been responsible for the change. He wrote to Furness on August 7 that

the Prime Minister saw Lord Allenby yesterday, and I am happy to say that I think all passed off very well. I have, however, had a good deal of trouble in preparing the ground, and it was with some anxiety that I awaited the issue. I saw Lord Allenby afterwards, and he seemed delighted on the whole with his reception. The disagreeable issue was not raised by the Prime Minister.²

Many years later, writing of the relationship between the two, Selby noted that, 'slightly suspicious the one of the other at first, their relations soon became very close, [with] Lord Allenby often observing to me that he had never had more satisfactory talks about Egypt than with Mr. MacDonald, who manifested much understanding and insight.'³

Allenby was never an imposing figure in London's world of committees and conferences and he now moved even further from the centre of policy formulation. While occasionally consulted, his role was peripheral and he rarely attended policy conferences or discussions. In the final weeks before the MacDonald-Zaghlul conversations, the only major meeting that Allenby attended was the CID conference on policy on October 2, and the impression was that he attended more in his capacity as Field Marshal than as High Commissioner. There was little doubt that as important as the Residency was in determining short-term Egyptian

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1. Selby to Kerr, September 27, 1924, MacDonald Papers, FO/800/218.
 2. Selby to Kerr, August 7, 1924, MacDonald Papers, FO/800/218.
 3. Selby to Wavell, December 9, 1936, KAP.

policy, its influence had declined when long-range policy was finally considered.

MacDonald's orthodoxy and control over policy notwithstanding, Egypt's affairs were as yet not settled. The only basis for the British position was the 1922 unilateral declaration, the unofficial Scott-Tharwat proces verbal,¹ and the 'Monroe Doctrine' to the Powers. There remained, therefore, a need to adopt a policy which would reconcile British-determined conditions of interest with the new realities of Egypt so that stability for the short-term and a final settlement in the more distant future was possible. Meanwhile, however, MacDonald, in his few remaining weeks as Prime Minister, continued to mark time. He was 'waiting for something to turn up,' or, in his words rather than in Mr. Micawber's: 'In the absence of such agreement [with Egypt] the position of my Country in relation to Egypt will continue to be governed by the policy adopted when the Protectorate was withdrawn.'²

The Stack Assassination and Allenby's Ultimatum

The relative stability anticipated in MacDonald's last statement on Egypt did not continue for long. Within days of a new government taking office in London, headed by Stanley Baldwin with Austen Chamberlain as Foreign Secretary, a violent explosion occurred in Egypt, dramatically altering the framework of Anglo-Egyptian relations.

At 1.30 p.m. on November 19, Sir Lee Stack, Governor-General of the Sudan and Sirdar of the Egyptian Army, was fatally wounded in an attack on the streets of Cairo. Suffering wounds in the abdomen, hand and foot, Stack lingered in shock for approximately thirty hours and died at 11.45 p.m. on November 20. Herbert Asquith, the former wartime Liberal Prime Minister, was Allenby's guest at the Residency when the attack occurred and described the events in a letter

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1. Even the Residency eventually recognized that the proces verbal was an unofficial document. Furness wrote that 'My view is that the proces verbal of January 20, 1922 was a binding agreement upon the Sarwat Ministry of 1922 and that it gave, vis-a-vis that Ministry, bilateral force to a part of the 1922 Declaration which itself was of course unilateral: but that it is not a binding engagement upon subsequent ministries.' R.F[Furness] to Henderson, 26.10.25, FO/141/515 (14382 Pt. I). Percival, the Judicial Adviser, agreed with Furness and Henderson and called the proces verbal a 'great moral force'. Percival, Minute, October 28 to ibid.
 2. MacDonald to Kerr, October 10, 1924, Tel. No. 191, FO/371/10043. MacDonald informed Kerr that this phrase would be used in the Speech from the Throne.

to Chamberlain:

We...had hardly sat down to Lunch when the news arrived that the Sirdar, who had just got into his car, had been attacked in one of the principal streets of the City, by a gang of from seven to ten young men of the Effendi class, and had received three wounds, and that his Aide-de-Camp had been shot in the chest. His chauffeur, an Australian, was also wounded in the leg and arm, but most gallantly drove on at full speed to the Residency, where the Sirdar was already lying on a couch in the next room.

The Ministers, with Zaghlul at their head, who for weeks past with their henchmen in the Chamber and the Press, have been denouncing English rule in the Sudan...came here in the afternoon huddled, cowering, and panic stricken, to express their sympathy. As Allenby grimly remarked to me, they were not 'genially' received.¹

The mood among the British in Cairo was grim. Despite the formal expressions of regret by the Egyptian government,² anger ran high and was directed primarily towards Zaghlul and his followers. Allenby could barely suppress his fury during a hasty visit to King Fuad, a few hours after Stack succumbed to his wounds. He denounced Zaghlul's communique to the press as 'quite inadequate and almost light hearted in its tone' and implicitly threatened Fuad's position if the latter would not express his regrets as King and Stack's Commander-in-Chief.³ The British community in Egypt, still bitter over the earlier wave of attacks and the treatment of foreign officials by Zaghlul's government, was in a state of shock. Gerald Delaney, long-time resident and Reuters correspondent wrote that

It is almost impossible to describe the bewilderment and indignation caused by the Sirdar crime. Egypt has become a country

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1. Asquith to Chamberlain, November 23, 1924, Private and Personal, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256. For a similar account, see: Asquith to family, November 22, 1924, in Asquith, op. cit., II, 218. Asquith was in Egypt as part of a tour of the region with his son, Brigadier Arthur Asquith, who as associated with cotton interests in the Sudan. For other accounts, see: Wavell, op. cit., pp. 109-10; and, Gardner, op. cit., p.247.
 2. Allenby to Chamberlain, November 19, 1924, Tel. No. 360, FO/371/10042, describes regrets expressed by Zaghlul; and, Chamberlain, November 21, 1924, Desp. No. 1146, FO/371/10043, for a description of a visit by the Egyptian Minister to Chamberlain.
 3. A[llenby], Minute, November 20, 1924, FO/141/514 (17490 Pt. I).

of sensations, but this outrage has transcended everything hitherto and it is impossible to predict what may be the outcome. The feeling among the British community is impossible of expression.¹

The anger and bitterness came to a head over the funeral arrangements made for Stack. P.K. Campbell, Stack's ADC, also wounded in the attack, described the events leading to the Sirdar's funeral in the Anglican Church of All Saints:

When the seating in the small church was first considered by Lord Allenby no mention was made of special accommodation for the Egyptian Ministers. Clark Kerr later influenced Lord Allenby to direct that a prominent position be given to Egyptian Ministers. Bishop Gwynne with whom Lord A. discussed the question did not agree with Lord A. and expressed himself in no uncertain terms.²

Asquith described the funeral itself as 'a simple but moving ceremony':

The whole British garrison was turned out and lined the streets: The Coffin was covered only by the Union Jack, Allenby having, very properly, refused to allow the Egyptian flag to be upon it. There were no demonstrations; the crowd was silent and stupefied; and the moral effect of the spectacle seemed to me to be impressive and even imposing.³

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1. G.C. Delaney, Egypt, 1924 - Notes for Lt.Gen. Sir Archibald Wavell, KAP.
 2. P.K. Campbell to Wavell, May 16, 1941, KAP. Some bitterness is seen here towards Clark Kerr, presumed by many in Egypt to be the author of Allenby's moderate policies in previous years.
 3. Asquith to Chamberlain, November 23, 1924, Private and Personal, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256. With regard to the impact of the Stack assassination in Britain, the initial reaction of the press was mixed. All expressed horror at the attack on and then death of Stack. Most called for firmness in the matter of British control of the Sudan. Beyond this, views were varied. Papers such as the Daily Express, Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph and the Morning Post, were most extreme in their response and called for the open or indirect revocation of independence: Daily Express, 'Outrage', November 20, 1924; Daily Mail, 'The Attack upon the Sirdar', November 20, 1924, and, 'Revoke Egyptian Independence', November 22, 1924; Daily Telegraph, 'The Egyptian Outrage', November 20, 1924, and 'Trustees for Egypt', November 21, 1924; Morning Post, 'The Shooting of the Sirdar', November 20, 1924, and, 'Murder Most Foul', November 22, 1924. Other newspapers, such as the Daily Chronicle, Daily News, Manchester Guardian, Observer, Sunday Times, Times and Westminster Gazette condemned the attack but warned against the inopportune imposition of a harsh policy. For such views, see: Daily Chronicle, 'The Cairo Outrage', November 20, 1924, and 'Crime in Egypt', November 22, 1924; Daily News, 'A Warning to Egypt', November 22, 1924; Manchester Guardian, 'The Egyptian Danger', November 20, 1924, and, 'The Murder in Egypt', November 22, 1924; Observer, 'The Hand of Anarchy', November 23, 1924; Sunday Times, 'The Egyptian

The course that Allenby and his advisers pursued during the initial days that followed Stack's murder seemed at first to be a radical departure from the policies that had been adopted by them since the winter of 1921. In place of moderation and accommodation, they chose a policy of seemingly harsh retaliation. Instead of concessions to Egyptian aspirations and withdrawal from the day-to-day management of Egypt's affairs, the Residency reverted to a policy of sharp and direct intervention in internal affairs reminiscent of the earlier pattern of British rule. The only familiar note struck during these early days was the attempt, once again, by the Residency, in a time of crisis, to re-assert its authority and to direct policy forcefully - even if that policy was not approved by London. And yet, Allenby's approach was in a very real sense consistent with his behaviour since his arrival in Egypt in 1919.

Within hours of the attack on the Sirdar, Allenby cabled London that, in view of the political bearing of this act on Egypt and the troubled Sudan, he intended to 'take immediate vigorous action.'¹ He explained that he intended to demand an apology, the vigorous prosecution of the criminals, a large indemnity, the withdrawal of Egyptian personnel from the Sudan army, increased irrigation in the Sudanese Gezirah beyond the 300,000 acre limit, an improvement in the conditions of service and retirement of foreign officials in Egypt, the maintenance of the powers and privileges of the Financial and Judicial Advisers, and, the safeguarding of the position of Director-General of the European Departments of the Ministry of Interior. Failing compliance by the Egyptian government, Allenby intended to warn that 'His Majesty's Government will take appropriate action to safeguard their interests in Egypt and the Soudan.'²

Allenby further explained that the action he proposed to take, a series of demands in the form of an ultimatum that would resolve the major outstanding issues, was based on the following considerations:

Spirit of indiscipline and hatred which Egyptian Government have

Crisis,' November 23, 1924; Times, 'The Cairo Outrage,' November 20, 1924, and, 'The Death of the Sirdar,' November 21, 1924; Westminster Gazette, 'The Outrage in Cairo,' November 21, 1924. The Daily Herald, 'Shall We Make the Same Mistake Again,' November 22, 1924, of course, warned the British government to 'remember the dignity of the Egyptian State.'

1. Allenby to Chamberlain, November 19, 1924, Tel. Nos. 362-3, FO/371/10043.
2. Allenby to Chamberlain, November 20, 1924, Tel. No. 368, FO/371/10043.

incited by public speeches and through activities of their Wafd cannot but be regarded as contributory to the crime. I should wish therefore that its effect be brought home to the present Government particularly...

...further than this it seems desirable and salutary to impress the country as a whole by some signal act of assertion.¹

Allenby's final words indicated his true intent - 'to settle our account with the present...Ministry.'²

The notion of settling accounts by ultimatum was not a new one, but appears to have been in the air in Cairo for some time. Hornsby, Governor of the National Bank of Egypt and one of Allenby's associates, wrote on November 21 that 'The British Govmt. has allowed the Egyptians to break away from the status quo in the last two years, but was contemplating the presentation of a "friendly ultimatum" to the Eg. Govt., summoning them to a strict observance of the status quo.'³ Allenby confirmed this several weeks later when he wrote to his sister that 'Stack's murder merely hurried a line of action, on our part, which had been inevitable. The attitude of Zaghlul would have necessitated my ultimatum anyhow.'⁴

The form that such an action might take could perhaps be discerned from similar events which occurred shortly after the war when several Turkish generals, among them Ali Ihsan Pasha, refused to disband their armies as required by the terms of the Armistice. Allenby sailed to Constantinople in February 1919 where, as he wrote,

I met the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of War. I gravely told them why I had come, and refusing to hear any arguments, I left them the text of my demands in English and in Turkish. They were quite taken aback; and I do not think they will forget it while they live.⁵

There could be little doubt that Allenby would take equally forceful action on this occasion, when he felt that the stability of the enterprise he and his associates had constructed was threatened by elements such as Zaghlul and the Wafd.

1. Allenby to Chamberlain, November 20, 1924, Tel. No. 369, FO/371/10043.

2. Ibid.

3. [Sir B. Hornsby], Memorandum (ms.) 21/11/24, STAC, Hornsby Papers, Box I, File I.

4. Allenby to Sister (Nell), 23.12.24, KAP.

5. Allenby to Lady Allenby, 5.2.19, KAP.

London's response to the events in Egypt was immediate. The Cabinet met on November 20 to consider the situation and approve measures proposed by Chamberlain. After considering Allenby's cables and the draft prepared by Murray and Chamberlain, it was agreed that 'the crime calls for decisive action with a view to putting an end to the campaign of hatred which has been stimulated in Egypt by a long series of attacks on the persons and authority of British officers and officials in the Sudan, attacks which the public utterances of Zaghloul have encouraged.'¹ Chamberlain's instructions to Allenby were approved, measures taken to assure military support, and, most important, the requirement that the Cabinet approve the draft communication prepared by Allenby before its submission to the Egyptian government.

The Foreign Office cabled urgent instructions to Allenby which reached Cairo shortly after 7.30 a.m. on November 21.² Chamberlain concurred with the need for decisive action, as well as an apology and the punishment of the attackers. Payment of an indemnity by the Egyptian government, however, was considered 'the least part of the reparation to be expected.'³ Chamberlain expanded on the measures to be taken to end Egyptian influence in the Sudan but with regard to increased irrigation of the Gezira, of great concern to Egypt dependent upon the Nile waters, he called for

The appointment of an Egyptian member of the commission to be set up by Your Lordship to examine a possibility of extending, without detriment to Egypt, the three hundred thousand acre area to be irrigated by the Blue Nile Dam.⁴

Finally, Allenby was explicitly instructed to prepare a draft communication for consideration by the Cabinet before submission.

Although there were some calls for dramatic action,⁵ Chamberlain and the

1. Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 61(24), November 20, 1924, CAB/23/49.
2. Chamberlain to Allenby, November 21, 1924, Tel. Nos. 217-18, FO/371/10043. The times of despatch and receipt of cables becomes crucial in the developments. A record of the times cables were despatched, received and decyphered in Cairo is in FO/141/432 (7946) and FO/141/514 (17490 Pt. I).
3. Chamberlain to Allenby, November 21, 1924, Tel. No. 217, FO/371/10043.
4. Ibid.
5. Cecil suggested the re-imposition of martial law. Cecil to Chamberlain, November 21, 1924, BM, Cecil Papers, add. 51078. Cecil withdrew his suggestion after critical comments by Murray and Tyrrell. W.T[yrrrell], Minute, November 21, 1924, FO/371/10044.

Foreign Office took a grave but calm view of matters. On November 21, Chamberlain more clearly than hitherto rejected the demand for the payment of an indemnity by the Egyptian government and stressed again that the draft communication to the Egyptian government be cabled to London as soon as possible since 'its exact terms must be examined and approved by Cabinet before presentation.'¹

The differences in approach between London and Cairo over the contents of the ultimatum were already becoming apparent. The Foreign Office opposed Allenby's demand for an indemnity, moderated the lifting of restrictions in the Gezira and insisted on the final approval of any communication to the Egyptian government. All these points were known to the Residency in Cairo by the morning of November 21.

Allenby responded to Chamberlain's instructions on November 21 and cabled a full draft of the text as requested. It was elaboration of the proposals submitted on November 19, including the proposed fine and increased Gezira irrigation. Allenby admitted that the fine might be undignified, as Chamberlain had pointed out, but he believed that 'This is the sort of sign of humiliation which is understood here.'² With regard to the Gezira and Chamberlain's modifications, Allenby felt that this demand 'would strike in the mind of the whole country.'³ His intention was clear - 'we must not fail to use fully this opportunity to bring Egypt to her senses, to assert our power to harm her and to stigmatize regime of present government.'⁴ Allenby's comments during the struggle with London over Egypt's independence - 'If you find a man down at your feet...you allowed him to get up, with a threat that if he didn't behave himself, you would down him again'⁵ - give an insight into his behaviour here. In 1922 circumstances called for generosity; now, after the Stack assassination, Allenby, the 'Bull', was prepared to 'down' his opponent again.

The draft note that Allenby proposed presenting demanded an apology from the Egyptian government, the prosecution and punishment of Stack's murderers, a fine of £500,000 to be paid to the British government, the immediate withdrawal of all Egyptian officers and purely Egyptian units in the Sudan, increased irrigation in the Sudan as the need arose, and, an end to opposition to British wishes

1. Chamberlain to Allenby, November 21, 1924, Tel. No. 220, FO/371/10043.

2. Allenby to Chamberlain, November 21, 1924, Tel. No. 380, FO/371/10044.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Sir B. Hornsby, Notes on a Conversation with Lord A., 2/2/22, STAC, Hornsby Papers, Box I, File II.

regarding the protection of foreign interests in Egypt.¹ A second note gave further details regarding the creation of a Sudan Defence Force and the position of foreign officials, the advisers and the Director-General of the European Department. Allenby's text was obviously a combination of his immediate reaction to events as well as long-standing Residency concerns. In addition, Allenby sought and received advice and encouragement from Herbert Asquith who was still his guest. Asquith's family interests in cotton growing in the Sudan no doubt gave him a particular viewpoint in this affair.² Allenby requested an immediate reply because he was anxious to present the ultimatum shortly after Stack's funeral on Saturday, November 22.

Chamberlain reacted quickly to Allenby's cables which reached London shortly after midnight on November 22. At 9.20 in the morning a cable was sent informing Allenby that a decision would be sought that same day. The Cabinet sat from noon until 1.30 p.m. and authorized Chamberlain's proposed text for submission

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1. Allenby to Chamberlain, November 21, 1924, Tel. No. 381, FO/371/10044.
 2. Asquith's role in the events surrounding the ultimatum is somewhat curious. By his own admission, Asquith encouraged Allenby. He wrote to Chamberlain that 'Allenby has kept me informed of the communications which have passed between him and the Foreign Office. I need not say that I am in complete sympathy with the line which he has taken. It is absolutely essential that there should be no wavering or delay.' Asquith to Chamberlain, November 23, 1924, Private and Personal, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256. This is supported by Col. C. Howard of the 16th/5th Lancers who were in Cairo when Stack was murdered. Asquith referred to Allenby's actions as 'a very good precedent.' Note by C. Howard to Wavell, March 11, 1937, KAP. Asquith, however, was by no means a disinterested party. He was touring Egypt and the Sudan with his son, Arthur Asquith, the Managing Director of the Sudan Plantations Syndicate and Chairman of the Kassala Cotton Company. Official Note on the Kassala Cotton Company in Empire Cotton Growing Corporation to Curzon, December 8, 1922, FO/371/7746. In addition, Asquith himself had lent his prestige to cotton interests in the Sudan. Balfour, as acting Foreign Secretary, met on July 5, 1922, with a delegation representing cotton interests. 'Their object was to impress on His Majesty's Government the great importance which they attached to the early completion of the Blue Nile dam and Gezira irrigation scheme in the Sudan.' The delegation was introduced by Herbert Asquith. Balfour, Press Communique, July 6, 1922, FO/371/7754. Asquith, whose family interests would benefit from expanded irrigation in the Sudan, was not an uninvolved bystander when he advised Allenby. Asquith later did claim that 'he would have preferred to keep separate...demands resulting directly from the crime and demands which could not logically be regarded as justifiable reparation for the crime.' Henderson to Selby, December 5, 1924, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256.

to the Egyptian government.¹ The Foreign Office text again differed from Allenby's on several important points. There was no mention of a fine or the conditions of service and retirement of foreign officials, the Gezira irrigation clause was still in its modified form, and, now, there was a demand for £E.1,000,000 per annum subvention from the Egyptian government to cover the costs of the proposed Sudan Defence Force. The same factors giving rise to differences between the British in London and Cairo in previous years were important here too: Chamberlain explained to Allenby that 'His Majesty's Government appreciated the importance of the local considerations which influenced you....They felt, however, that the importance of taking into consideration public opinion abroad and at home were so great that it outweighed the considerations which you urged...'²

In the midst of the deliberations in London, Allenby, concerned that Zaghlul might resign in order to avoid receiving the ultimatum, cabled Chamberlain that 'It is essential that I should deliver note before Parliament meet at five o'clock.'³ This was the first instance that a specific time had been set by Allenby and there still was no clear reason given for the urgent need to deliver the ultimatum by that hour.

Messages crossed each other and the Residency awaited word from London with growing impatience. Allenby waited until the last possible moment and at 4.47 p.m. Chamberlain's cables arrived. From their length it was apparent that this was not a simple approval of Allenby's text. There was no time to decypher the encoded messages and still deliver them to Zaghlul before the reconvening of Parliament at 5.00 p.m. at which time, so Allenby had been informed, Zaghlul would resign. Colonel Howard of the 16th/5th Lancers described the scene outside the Residency:

The Regiment was ordered to parade...at the front of the Residency at a certain hour, but there were continued postponements and eventually we were ordered to parade just before five o'clock, when it would shortly be beginning to get dark. We waited till the light was going and then suddenly out came Lord Allenby in his car and went off very fast, leaving only time for one or two of the two

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1. Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 62(24), November 22, 1924, CAB/23/49. Chamberlain's authorised text was despatched at 1.55 and 2.00 p.m. Chamberlain to Allenby, November 22, 1924, Tel. Nos. 225-6, FO/371/10044.
 2. Chamberlain to Allenby, November 22, 1924, Private, Tel. No. 228, FO/371/10044.
 3. Allenby to Chamberlain, November 22, 1924, Tel. No. 383, FO/371/10044. This was received in London during the Cabinet meeting at 12.35 p.m.

leading squadrons to wheel in front of his car.¹

Allenby broke with all traditions when he called upon Zaghlul. Ordinarily the High Commissioner was accompanied by two motorcyclists when he visited the Prime Minister. On this occasion he was accompanied by a full regiment and heralded by the Royal Salute. In addition, although Allenby's escort emphasised his position, his dress - a lounge suit rather than military uniform - was a calculated insult to the person he was seeing, Zaghlul. Allenby, as in his demarche with the Turkish ministers in February 1919, sought to make the greatest impact possible and, according to Gerald Delaney, succeeded beyond all doubt:

As the cavalry traversed the streets at a slow trot, escorting Viscount Allenby in his motor car, onlookers were puzzled at this unprecedented sight. When the cavalcade turned into the street in which Parliament House and the Prime Minister's Office are situated, Deputies were commencing to arrive for the sitting of Parliament. They were held up by the escort....

Viscount Allenby descending from his car, again received the Royal Salute. Windows in Parliament House were thrown open and disturbed faces appeared, the Deputies at first fearing the Parliament itself was about to be surrounded. Crowds were now rapidly gathering, but the police kept them at a respectable distance.

Allenby read the British Note to the Premier in English, then handed it to him with a French translation. The Premier was quite calm and with characteristic Oriental courtesy asked the High Commissioner if he would take a cup of coffee. Allenby with a curt 'No, thank you' took his departure. The whole business had lasted five minutes.

Allenby stood to attention outside the gates of Zaghlul's office while the Royal Salute was again sounded, and then returned with his cavalry escort to the Residency.²

Allenby thereupon informed London of the events. In the meantime, there remained little for Austen Chamberlain to do but note that he had called 'immediate meeting of His Majesty's Ministers to consider situation thus created...'³

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1. Note by C. Howard to Wavell, March 11, 1937, KAP.
 2. G.C. Delaney, Egypt, 1924 - Notes for Lt. Gen. Sir Archibald Wavell, KAP. The full text of Allenby's two notes are in Allenby to Chamberlain, November 22, 1924, Tel. No. 385, FO/371/10044.
 3. Chamberlain to Allenby, November 22, 1924, Tel. No. 231, FO/371/10044.

Aftermath: Allenby's Resignation

News of Allenby's action reached London on the evening of Saturday, November 22, after the Cabinet had dispersed for the weekend. Chamberlain could only find five other Cabinet Ministers - one having been fetched out of a Turkish bath.¹ There was evident anger over Allenby's disregard, yet again, of Cabinet instructions. Chamberlain, with the assistance of Tyrrell and Murray, informed the Conference of Ministers of the events that had transpired. The Conference decided that Allenby had not been justified in acting in defiance of the Foreign Secretary's express instructions, but were now forced to support him lest there be 'the appearance of hesitation and loss of prestige which would be involved in disavowing Lord Allenby's action.'² After securing Baldwin's agreement, Chamberlain was authorised to inform Allenby of the Cabinet's dismay.

Chamberlain immediately sent a sharp message to Allenby stating that 'I cannot conceal my concern that you did not wait to receive the decision of the Cabinet,' adding that 'I do not at present understand the extreme urgency under which you acted.'³ He informed Allenby that, although the ultimatum would be supported for the meantime, the position might have to be restated after the crisis was over. After twenty-four hours had passed and still no detailed explanation had arrived, Chamberlain angrily cabled that 'I must request that you will keep me fully informed of situation and of your intentions.'⁴ Although a

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1. Amery was found there. Amery, op.cit., II, 305. The others were Churchill, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Birkenhead, Secretary of State for India, Steel-Maitland, Minister of Labour, Lloyd Greame, President of the Board of Trade, and Hogg, Attorney General. Conclusions of Conference of Ministers Held at the Foreign Office on Saturday, November 22, 1924, at 6.00 p.m. in Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 63(24), November 24, 1924, CAB/23/49.
 2. Ibid. With regard to specific reactions, throughout this period Amery was concerned about the reactions of the Dominions. Consultation with their governments was a major issue at this time. This can be seen in Amery's circular telegrams to the Governors-General of the Dominions on November 21 and 22, and particularly the letter in which he informed the Dominion governments that Allenby's ultimatum had not been authorized by the Cabinet. FO/371/10044. Churchill, Allenby's critic for years, wrote to Chamberlain immediately after the meeting of the Ministers about the 'evil chance & wrong conduct' leading to the crisis. Churchill to Chamberlain, November 22, 1924, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256.
 3. Chamberlain to Allenby, November 22, 1924, Tel. No. 232, FO/371/10044. This was drafted in Chamberlain's own hand.
 4. Chamberlain to Allenby, November 23, 1924, Tel. No. 234, FO/371/10044. This too was drafted by Chamberlain.

long explanatory message arrived in London a few hours later, the die was cast. Allenby, under the pressure of events and confident of his judgement and that of his associates, had again taken matters into his own hands. London, thwarted, had again reacted with anger. This time, however, the Foreign Secretary was a powerful figure who enjoyed the firm support of his Prime Minister.

In Egypt events moved quickly. Zaghlul, under incredible pressure, paid the £500,000 fine, apologised under duress for Stack's murder, suppressed public demonstrations as demanded by Allenby, and noted that the Egyptian government would naturally prosecute the perpetrators vigorously. Zaghlul, however, refused to accede to Allenby's demands on the Gezira, foreign officials, the advisers, and, the removal of Egyptian officers and units from the Sudan. Allenby therefore informed Zaghlul that the British government would enforce on its own the demands regarding irrigation in the Gezira and the Sudan army.¹

Allenby was deeply concerned by the developments in Egypt and the possibility of further outrages. He had been informed that several Wafd supporters, William Makram, Nakrashi and Abd al-Rahman Fahmi, had sworn oaths to murder Englishmen.² As a result of this information and the continued non-compliance by the Egyptian government with some of the terms of the ultimatum, Allenby proposed a military and naval display, the formal rupture of diplomatic relations, the occupation of the Alexandria customs house to secure revenue, and, most ominous, 'Hostages to be taken if another Englishman or foreigner is murdered and to be shot if murders continue.'³ He admitted that 'This is repugnant,' but added that 'It is only way of stopping murders.'⁴ Although Zaghlul had resigned and been replaced by Ahmad Ziwari Pasha, known for his 'predilection for European society...most friendly to Englishmen,'⁵ the evacuation of Egyptian units from the Sudan was already encountering difficulties and threatened to become more serious.

As soon as Chamberlain received news from Egypt he informed Allenby that he approved the most recent note to Zaghlul and the military and police measures

1. Zaghlul's response to Allenby's ultimatum is in Allenby to Chamberlain, November 23, 1924, Tel. No. 389; Allenby's note to Zaghlul is in Allenby to Chamberlain, November 23, 1924, Tel. No. 391, FO/371/10044.
2. Allenby to Chamberlain, November 24, 1924, Tel. No. 396, FO/371/10044.
3. Allenby to Chamberlain, November 24, 1924, Tel. No. 390, FO/371/10044.
4. Ibid.
5. Residency File, Ahmad Ziwari Pasha, November 24, 1924, FO/141/684(9465).

taken to assure order. Chamberlain, however, felt that the rupture of relations would be of no advantage and he was adamantly opposed to the shooting of hostages: 'It is a measure so repugnant to British traditions that only in last extremity if at all would public opinion here and in British Dominions support you.'¹ Chamberlain was also upset because of the Reuters report that Allenby had already informed the Egyptian government that the Alexandria customs house would be occupied before he had received Foreign Office approval for this step. Fearing a repetition of the events surrounding the November 22 ultimatum, Chamberlain cabled Allenby that 'I must insist that political measures of grave impact...shall not be undertaken until I have approved them.'²

There was growing concern in London in the wake of Allenby's ultimatum and the terms in which it was couched. The possibility of difficulties with the League of Nations over the dispute with Egypt,³ continued anxiety about the Dominions and particularly their reaction to the lifting of irrigation restrictions in the Gezira,⁴ and doubts about Allenby's judgement gave rise to great anxiety.⁵

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1. Chamberlain to Allenby, November 24, 1924, Tel. No. 237, FO/371/10044.
 2. Chamberlain to Allenby, November 24, 1924, Tel. No. 239, FO/371/10044. This telegram was also written by Chamberlain. Allenby apologized for the failure to await approval of the seizure of the Customs House because Zaghlul was about to resign. Allenby to Chamberlain, November 24, 1924, Tel. No. 402, FO/371/10044.
 3. Salisbury was one of the first to raise this. Salisbury to Chamberlain, November 23, 1924, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256. The Foreign Office shared Salisbury's concern about the League of Nations competence to intervene in the dispute under Article 21 of the Covenant. See, Minutes by Cecil Hurst, November 26, W. Orchard, November 28, and R.I. Campbell, December 1, 1924, FO/371/10046.
 4. See Governor-General of Australia to Amery, November 26, 1924, FO/371/10074. Chamberlain was particularly worried about the possible paralysis of the British Empire in time of crisis, such as the Egyptian dispute, because of the requirements of Dominion consultation. A.C[hamberlain], 20/12/14, CUL, Baldwin Papers, Vol. 93. Even a supporter of cotton interests, such as Lord Derby, questioned the wisdom of the inclusion of the Gezira demands. Derby to Chamberlain, November 26, 1924, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256. This issue was also raised in the press. The Daily Express, the strongest supporter of the ultimatum policy, felt that the fine and the irrigation clauses were out of place. Daily Express, 'The Ultimatum and the Reply,' November 24, 1924.
 5. Even Allenby's civilian dress at the time of the delivery of the ultimatum was questioned. Chamberlain compared it to 'the action of the little boy who puts his thumb to his nose and extends his four fingers in a vulgar expression of defiance and contempt.' Chamberlain to Stamfordham, November 24, 1924, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256.

Allenby's request to take hostages and execute them, if necessary, appeared to confirm London's worst fears.

The Cabinet met in this atmosphere on the evening of November 24, the first full session since the delivery of the ultimatum. Chamberlain expressed the disapproval and anger felt at the Foreign Office - sentiments based on Allenby's six years in Egypt.¹ The Cabinet approved Chamberlain's rebuke to Allenby, accepted the terms of the ultimatum as a fait accompli not to be revoked and absolutely forbade the shooting of hostages 'in any circumstances.'² In order to maintain a close watch over developments in Egypt and to assist Chamberlain, in case of need, the Cabinet also established a Committee on Egypt consisting of Baldwin, Curzon, Churchill, Birkenhead, Worthington-Evans, Amery and Cecil. The Committee, especially Curzon, Churchill, Amery and Worthington-Evans, was not well-disposed towards Allenby and his previous behaviour and policies. Finally, and in the end most important, the Cabinet approved the despatch of an experienced diplomat, Neville Henderson, ostensibly to strengthen Allenby's staff and to explain fully to the High Commissioner the views of the British government.

Chamberlain informed Allenby of the Cabinet's decisions, emphasising the absolute ban on hostages, and attempted to portray Henderson's role in as innocuous a light as possible:

I am impressed with the difficulty of putting you fully in possession of the mind and purpose of His Majesty's Government by a simple exchange of telegrams. I have therefore decided to send Mr. Neville Henderson to Cairo. He is an official of exceptional experience, and I have explained to him verbally with a completeness which is not possible in telegraphic communications the objects at which His Majesty's Government are aiming and the difficulties which they wish to avoid. He has my fullest confidence, and will I am sure make your task easier by the explanations which he will be able to give you. He will join your staff with the rank of Minister and will, I hope, lighten a burden which must be excessive with your present small staff.³

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1. Amery commented that 'The Foreign Office, as a Department, had long disliked the exceptional position enjoyed by our High Commissioner in Egypt, and had wished the post to be held by an ordinary member of the Diplomatic Service in the due course of promotion.' Amery, op. cit., II, 306.
 2. Cabinet Minutes, Cabinet 63(24), November 24, 1924, CAB/23/49.
 3. Chamberlain to Allenby, November 24, 1924, Tel. No. 245, FO/371/10044.

Two storms broke over Cairo almost at once: rebellion among Egyptian and Sudanese troops in the Sudan, and Nevile Henderson's appointment as Minister Plenipotentiary at the Residency. Each would occupy Allenby and his staff during the coming days.

For quite some time there had been unrest in the Sudan, to some extent the result of British attempts to win the loyalty of the Sudanese to the Sudan government and Egyptian attempts, often through the Egyptian Army, to gain allegiance for the King of Egypt.¹ The efforts of the British to use the Egyptian crisis to implement long-standing plans to end Egyptian influence in the Sudan gave focus to this unrest. Egyptian troops being withdrawn from the Sudan very quickly refused to move without orders from King Fuad, their Commander-in-Chief.² At Talodi, Egyptian officers were joined by Sudanese on November 26. Two days later, the 11th Sudanese Battalion mutinied and heavy casualties had to be inflicted to restore order. There were difficulties with embarking Egyptian troops in Port Sudan. Additional British troops were moved to the trouble spots and the outbreaks were suppressed by the end of November.³ The situation, however, remained unsettled contributing to the tension in Cairo.

Henderson's appointment as Minister delivered a similar shock to the Residency. Selby, one of Allenby's closest advisers in earlier years and now Chamberlain's Principal Private Secretary, attributed Henderson's appointment to a 'wave of suggestion that had swept over London.'⁴ Still he maintained that Chamberlain 'neither intended nor expected for one moment it would have the effect it did have so far as Allenby was concerned.'⁵ There should, however, have been little doubt that Henderson's sudden appointment within days of the ultimatum and with the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary, superseding Clark Kerr, would arouse strong suspicion and resentment. The innocuous explanations of the appointment and Selby's confidence in Chamberlain are not supported by Henderson's background and preparation for the mission he was about to undertake.

Henderson was sent as an experienced diplomat who would be able to strengthen

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1. For one example of such recent activity at Malaka, see: Kerr to MacDonald, September 29, 1924, Tel. No. 322, FO/371/10053.
 2. Allenby to Chamberlain, November 25, 1924, Tel. No. 420, FO/371/10044.
 3. For full details of the mutinies and their impact, see: Col. Huddleston's personal account in Allenby to Chamberlain, December 6, 1924, Desp. No. 708, FO/371/10054; and, the Residency file on the mutinies, FO/141/493(17520).
 4. Selby to Wavell, December 9, 1936, KAP.
 5. Ibid.

Allenby's staff and apprise the High Commissioner of London's views. Yet Henderson, who had just left his position as Counsellor in Constantinople, himself believed that he was chosen to go to Cairo because 'I happened to be available and on leave.'¹ In addition, his preparation for his mission to Egypt also raises serious doubts:

I had a long talk with Sir Austen Chamberlain and Crowe that evening, caught a late train to Sedgwick to collect some clothes, had another hour or so's coaching from Chamberlain and Crowe on the Monday morning and left that evening for Trieste....As it happened, I learned almost more by chance remarks by Willie Tyrrell and Selby than I did in several hours conversations with the Secretary and Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. I had been given the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary to strengthen my position in Cairo. Tyrrell said to me, 'It's to gild the pill.' Selby's hint to me was, 'For goodness sake, do not lose your temper with Allenby.'²

Nevertheless Allenby's initial reaction was mild enough. He welcomed Henderson's appointment and assistance but stated that 'I should like to be reassured that it is not intended to supersede my counsellor in whom as in other members of my staff I have complete confidence.'³ Chamberlain, however, saw this response as threatening and asked Baldwin to convene the Cabinet Committee on Egypt because 'it is best that they should be consulted.'⁴

A few hours later, a more sharply worded cable arrived from Allenby. The full impact of the appointment and its terms of reference had apparently been felt. Allenby informed Chamberlain that, as a result of the public announcement, Henderson's appointment 'has been taken here as amounting to my practical supersession, has seriously weakened my position which will become untenable unless you can see your way to correct that impression by making without delay a public announcement that Mr. Henderson is coming solely for the purpose of discussing the situation and facilitating exchange of views between you and myself and that he will leave for London within a week of his arrival.'⁵

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1. Sir Neville Henderson, Water Under the Bridges (London, 1945), p. 133.
 2. Ibid., pp. 134-5.
 3. Allenby to Chamberlain, November 25, 1924, Unnumbered, Private, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256.
 4. A.[Chamberlain] to Prime Minister, November 26, 1924, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256.
 5. Allenby to Chamberlain, November 26, 1924, Unnumbered, Private, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256.

Chamberlain responded sharply to Allenby's first 'private' cable. Allenby's concern about the impact of Henderson's appointment on the Residency staff in a time of crisis was treated as a minor issue and he was asked 'not to allow any personal question to arise among your staff in difficult situation.'¹ Allenby's second message, expressing concern over the appointment's impact on Allenby's own position in Egypt, was answered with a stern rebuke that Allenby would inevitably find offensive:

There is no reflection on anyone least of all you. I have my own responsibilities which you must allow me to discharge. In no circumstances can I allow arrangements which I have deliberately made after careful consideration to be questioned. I feel sure that I may rely on your receiving Mr. Henderson in the manner to which he is entitled in the position I have assigned to him....I am really sorry that you should have felt constrained to raise any personal question at a moment when as far as I can see your policy is proving successful....²

As in 1922, the stage was set for another clash of wills between the Foreign Office and Allenby in Cairo. Chamberlain, who in 1922 had obscured in Parliament the government's defeat over Egypt's independence, prepared his colleagues for future developments. He sent the 'private' cables to Baldwin claiming that he had 'done everything in my power from first to last to support Allenby...to present the new appointment to him in the form most agreeable to him and least disagreeable to his present Counsellor Clark Kerr...'³ Still, he warned the Prime Minister, 'you ought to know what has passed and be prepared for what may happen.'⁴ Although Allenby had not yet mentioned resignation, events were moving rapidly in that direction.

Chamberlain's fears were soon realised. On November 26 Allenby sent a sharply worded cable which took the conflict beyond the point of no return:

You have missed my point.

I have no personal feeling....Announcement of Mr. Henderson's

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1. Chamberlain to Allenby, November 26, 1924, Unnumbered, Private, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256. This was seen by Tyrell and Crowe.
 2. Chamberlain to Allenby, November 26, 1924, Unnumbered, Private, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256. This was the second private cable of that day and was sent before the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Egypt.
 3. Chamberlain to Baldwin, November 26, 1924, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256.
 4. Ibid.

appointment is ruinous to position of His Majesty's High Commissioner in Egypt. It has had already a lamentably bad effect. Under present circumstances obviously I cannot offer my resignation but I must ask that if my advice given in my private telegram of today is now overruled you will present to His Majesty my humble duty with request that so soon as His Majesty can dispense with my services here he will be graciously pleased to do so seeing that I no longer have the confidence of His Majesty's Government.¹

Chamberlain consulted with his colleagues on the Cabinet Committee for Egypt and received their agreement to a reply. Although the language of this message was milder than before, Chamberlain would not be moved. Pointing out that the position of Minister Plenipotentiary had existed previously at the Residency, he promised to continue to work in a spirit of co-operation. With regard to Allenby's resignation, Chamberlain wrote, 'I beg you not to talk of resignation in midst of crisis when even the suggestion cannot be made without prejudicing public interests.'² This, however, did not mean that Allenby's resignation could not be discussed once the crisis had passed.

Allenby, however, did not relent and quickly replied that his objection was not to Henderson's title but to its impact on Egypt. Citing the deteriorating political situation in the country, he re-affirmed his desire to resign.³ Henderson, a few days after his arrival in Egypt, confirmed Allenby's apprehensions about the local effects of the appointment. He wrote to Selby that

...what is absolutely undeniable is that my appointment did create an unfortunate impression and effect here. It made most of the Egyptians and some others who should know better imagine that I was coming out here (a) to supplant and override Lord Allenby and (b) to modify the ultimatum policy. The result was (a) to lower the High Commissioner's personal prestige and (b) to diminish greatly the good effects of the ultimatum and to hamper our policy out here.⁴

Chamberlain nevertheless appealed to Allenby as a soldier and official of the

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1. Allenby to Chamberlain, November 26, 1924, Unnumbered, Private, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256.
 2. Chamberlain to Allenby, November 27, 1924, Unnumbered, Private and Personal, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256.
 3. Allenby to Chamberlain, November 27, 1924, Unnumbered, Private and Personal, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256.
 4. Henderson to Selby, December 5, 1924, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256. Also, see: Henderson, op. cit., p. 136.

Crown not to press the government at that time for a decision on his resignation.

The dispute between Allenby and Chamberlain was being pursued from different perspectives. Chamberlain obviously considered the issue of Henderson's appointment to have been resolved, with the question of the government's confidence in Allenby and the latter's resignation being a separate matter. Therefore, protecting his own prerogatives as Foreign Secretary, Chamberlain refused to reconsider the appointment and at the same time re-assured Allenby of confidence and co-operation. Allenby, however, having to deal with the consequences of the appointment in Egypt, clearly believed that the government's future actions on the appointment would be a reflection of the attitude they took towards him. With characteristic bluntness, he made this clear to Chamberlain on November 29:

Either you have confidence in me or you have not. Since you have made a striking appointment to my staff in the midst of a crisis without consulting me and published it without giving me an opportunity of expressing my opinion, I presume you have not. It is therefore my duty to resign.¹

Chamberlain had to accept the inevitable. Unlike Curzon, he could not accept such a challenge to his authority. He therefore informed Baldwin that 'Allenby seems to me to leave H.M. Govmt no choice but to accept his resignation for the time being when the public interest allows of a change.'² Chamberlain's anger was barely suppressed in a letter to Lord Stamfordham, intended for the King's information: 'I cannot tell you how profoundly I deplore the, in my opinion, unreasonable and even improper attitude adopted by Lord Allenby.'³ Allenby was thus informed that the Cabinet would consider his resignation on December 1, the day Henderson arrived in Egypt.

The final exchange of cables between Chamberlain and Allenby took place after the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on December 1 and merely confirmed Allenby's resignation, a development that apparently was unavoidable from the moment Henderson's appointment was announced. Given the recent history of relations between the British in London and Cairo, the personalities and perceptions of the protagonists, and the issues involved, neither side could retreat. This time Lloyd George was not available to overrule his Foreign Secretary and ask Allenby to wait

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1. Allenby to Chamberlain, November 29, 1924, Unnumbered, Private and Personal, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256.
 2. Chamberlain to Baldwin, 29.11.24, Secret, CUL, Baldwin Papers, Vol. 114.
 3. Chamberlain to Stamfordham, November 29, 1924, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256.

but a few moments more so that the government of the day could beat a hasty but dignified retreat.

Allenby's Final Months

Allenby's final months were spent in the shadow of the ultimatum and of his resignation as High Commissioner. The days following the delivery of the ultimatum saw a return to the 'minister-ing' that Allenby had sought to end with the declaration of Egypt's independence in 1922. There was once again daily and close involvement in Egypt's political life and in all matters affecting public security, concerns which after the adoption of the constitution should have been the province of the Egyptian government.

The first issue to be resolved after the appointment of Ziwar Pasha as Prime Minister was the release of the Alexandria customs house that had been occupied when Zaghlul rejected Allenby's demands over the conditions of service and retirement of foreign officials. Allenby made it clear to Ziwar that a return to normalcy would be possible only after public order was assured and the Egyptian government accepted the remaining demands contained in the ultimatum, those dealing with the foreign officials and the authority and traditional privileges of the advisers.¹

The Egyptian government eventually moved on the question of security and, much to the relief of the Residency, arrested the three Wafd Deputies suspected of taking oaths to murder Englishmen. In addition, forty suspects were detained in connection with the attack on the Sirdar. This meant that there would be no need for the British to become directly involved in the detention of Egyptians, a possibility that earlier had led London to fear that the Residency intended to re-impose martial law in Egypt.

The restoration of order in Egypt and the Sudan² permitted consideration of

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1. Allenby to Chamberlain, November 26, 1924, Tel. No. 436, FO/371/10045.
 2. There was still some concern over the Sudan but this was confined mainly to future developments. The Sudan government was eager to implement the separation, in practice if not in theory, of the Sudan from Egypt as well as concerned about potential sources of unrest. They therefore proposed the symbolic but significant measure of lowering the Egyptian flag in the Sudan. There was some resentment over the Residency's seeming indifference to the Sudan government's concerns because of preoccupation with Egyptian affairs. Schuster, who was responsible for financial affairs in the Sudan, wrote that 'As regards the future...it appears that we must rely on the Home Government

the outstanding clauses of the ultimatum. There were some difficulties in securing Ziwari's agreement to the details of an exchange of notes, in part a result of doubts over Allenby's position and British policy and, in part, because of the legal advice Ziwari received. However, by November 30 this issue was also resolved and the Alexandria customs house was evacuated by British troops on December 3.

Once these matters were resolved, Ziwari turned to the character and prospects of his new administration. The Residency reported that the 'Prime Minister having now had time to think of future is impressed with necessity of endeavouring to inflict crushing defeat on Zaghloulism if Egypt is to hope for decent Administration, good order and friendly relations with us.'¹ The methods of establishing order and assuming electoral victory, namely, replacement of provincial officials and the forging of political alliances against the Wafd, indicated that little had changed in recent years. The political concerns of the Egyptian government, once again, openly supported by the Residency, were much as they had been in 1922.

Residency concern and involvement went beyond the immediate intrigues of Egyptian politics. The fact that complete disengagement from Egyptian affairs, as had been hoped, was not possible had now been made clear with Stack's murder. Allenby's ultimatum and the enforced restoration of the authority of the Advisers was proof of this. If Britain was to remain in Egypt and insist on retaining responsibility for foreign and imperial interests, the situation would continue. Amos pointed to the dilemma of Britain's presence in Egypt with regard to the maintenance of public order:

Recent events have I think made it plain that we are in a false position with regard to the maintenance of public order in Egypt, particularly in respect to the protection of British and foreign lives and property.

On the one hand it is clear that we have a responsibility in this respect. On the other hand we seem to be seriously ill-provided with the means of discharging that responsibility.²

and not on the Residency.' Schuster, Memorandum on Events in Egypt and the Sudan, December 14, 1924, FO/371/10883. For correspondence on the issue of the Egyptian flag, see: Allenby to Chamberlain, November 29, 1924, Desp. No. 694, FO/371/10054 and Allenby to Chamberlain, December 14, 1924, Tel. Nos. 533-35, FO/371/10055.

1. Allenby to Chamberlain, December 5, 1924, Tel. No. 505, FO/371/10022.
2. Amos to Kerr, 4.12.24, FO/141/793.

Amos' solution to this dilemma in the event of a crisis: 'I think that it would be necessary, in substance if not in name, to re-establish martial law.'¹ Although Amos feared this possibility and sought to avoid it, the patterns of the past had returned.

In London, once the tensions of the events surrounding the ultimatum had subsided, officials at the Foreign Office began to consider Egypt's prospects in the light of new circumstances. In this context, there was reference to the need for a new High Commissioner in Egypt. Tyrrell, concerned about the future of Ziwar's government, commented that 'A capable High Commissioner in Cairo is more necessary than ever now for the success of the new venture.'² Crowe echoed these sentiments in even harsher words: 'I agree with Sir W. Tyrrell that there is an urgent necessity of installing a stronger and more capable High Commissioner at Cairo. Under the present regime we are not in safe hands, and a great crisis may face us any day.'³ Chamberlain submitted these papers to Baldwin on December 15.

On that same day the first of two despatches by Allenby describing the recent crisis reached London.⁴ It was a reasoned and capable defence of the Residency's actions in preceding weeks. Even officials who had been sharply critical of Allenby admitted that, except for the defence of the irrigation clause, the despatch offered 'an excellent opportunity for a temperate and carefully worded reply...suitable for publication in a White Paper.'⁵

As a result of Allenby's able despatch and the desire to maintain public unity over Egyptian policy, if and when papers were laid before Parliament, a moderate reply was prepared. This only referred to differences 'of a very minor character' between Chamberlain and Allenby.⁶ The bitter dispute over Henderson's appointment

1. Ibid.
2. W.T. [Tyrrell]., December 10, 1924, minute to Foreign Office Memorandum, December 10, 1924, FO/371/10059.
3. EAC [Crowe], Minute, December 10, 1924, to ibid.
4. Allenby to Chamberlain, December 7, 1924, Desp. No. 721, FO/371/10046. The second despatch, Allenby to Chamberlain, December 14, 1924, Desp. No. 736, FO/371/10047, reached London on December 22.
5. J. Murray, December 18, 1924, minute to Allenby to Chamberlain, December 7, 1924, Desp. No. 721, FO/371/10046.
6. Chamberlain to Allenby, December 22, 1924, Desp. No. 1284, FO/371/10046.

is not mentioned at all.

Chamberlain, apparently intent on preventing a public discussion of the differences between London and Cairo when Allenby's resignation was formally submitted, wrote a conciliatory letter to Allenby asking that he

...let that one small misunderstanding be forgotten; and when this crisis has passed let me submit your request for permission to resign as the natural desire of a great servant of the Crown to take the opportunity offered by the end of one chapter in our relations with Egypt and the beginning of another as the proper moment to seek relief from the strain of such long and arduous service and the natural and most honourable close of your great career in the Near East first as soldier then as statesman.¹

Allenby, however, showed the same uncompromising qualities that were responsible for his success in 1922 and that led to his resignation in 1924. He refused to engage in the proposed diplomatic exercise. Allenby replied on January 1 that

I share your regret that any difference should have arisen between us. I do not, however, attribute it to imperfect understanding, nor to a failure on your part to convey to me the full sense of mutual obligations....I cannot agree that the difference was merely a momentary misunderstanding. I said, in my telegram ...that, for reasons I then gave, my position would become untenable if you did not take steps to correct the impression made by the announcement of Mr. Henderson's appointment as Minister Plenipotentiary. The word untenable has only one meaning.

....

...though I thank you for suggesting the solution, I cannot ask to be retired with a view to relief from strain which I do not feel.

I must, therefore, beg that, when the crisis is passed, you will submit my application to be allowed to resign my present appointment on the grounds given in my telegram...²

The additional questions that arose in Allenby's final months in Egypt were dealt with satisfactorily as a result of Britain's powerful position and the absence of a strong Egyptian leader able to oppose British interests and wishes.

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1. Chamberlain to Allenby, December 22, 1924, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/256. Chamberlain's sincerity is suspect. He wrote to one associate that 'I will write direct to Allenby. That appears to be the correct practice in this Department - and I am nothing if not "correct"...' Chamberlain to Hamar, December 22, 1924 in ibid.
 2. Allenby to Chamberlain, January 1, 1925, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/257.

The resolution of issues was less a matter of negotiation than the acceptance of British terms that were designed to avoid making Ziwari's position untenable.

One of the most important points that arose was the establishment of a new order in the Sudan, a goal long cherished by the British but imposed only in the wake of Stack's murder. The policy was one that would maintain a nominal condominium while at the same time effectively remove Egyptian influence from the Sudan. The creation of an independent Sudan Defence Force, with its own commander and owing allegiance to the Sudan government, was the most visible and important development.¹ As a result of Treasury pressure on the Foreign Office, the British were also able to secure an annual subvention of £E.750,000, to be 'at the disposal of Sudanese Government for military expenses of the Sudan.'² Finally, the question of Gezira irrigation was also resolved and a Commission of three, a British representative, an Egyptian representative and a neutral chairman, was established on January 27 with a mandate to report by the end of June. The aim of the Commission was to examine and to propose 'the basis on which irrigation can be carried out with full consideration of the interests of Egypt and without detriment to her natural and historic rights.'³

In Egypt, foreign officials took advantage of the new conditions governing retirement and this issue also appears to have been resolved temporarily.⁴ Perhaps the most contentious issue to arise during this period was the command of the Egyptian Army. Stack had been the Sirdar of the Egyptian and Sudanese forces. As a result of his murder and the final separation of forces into two armies, there was a need to appoint a Sirdar of the Egyptian Army. Stack's murder did not cause Allenby to abandon his earlier view that once the two commands were separated, the Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Army should be an Egyptian.⁵ Allenby adopted this view as consistent with British policy as enunciated in the 1922 declaration. Despite acrimonious debate in the British Cabinet, Chamberlain approved in February 1925 an Egyptian proposal whereby an Egyptian would serve as Sirdar and an Englishman

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1. See Allenby's note to Ziwari, January 25, 1925, informing him of the inauguration of the force in Allenby to Chamberlain, February 1, 1925, Desp. No. 78, FO/371/10879.
 2. Allenby to Chamberlain, March 13, 1925, Tel. No. 112, FO/371/10883.
 3. Allenby to Chamberlain, January 31, 1925, Tel. No. 49, FO/371/10882.
 4. Allenby to Chamberlain, February 8, 1925, Desp. No. 91, FO/371/10890.
 5. Allenby to Chamberlain, November 26, 1924, Tel. No. 439, FO/371/10045.

as Adjutant General.¹ Finally, the perpetrators of the Stack assassination were apprehended as a result of an extensive investigation by British police officers serving in Egypt.²

Political life in Egypt was also marked by the ultimatum. Zaghlul resigned on November 24 after receiving Allenby's note informing him of the intended occupation of the Alexandria customs house. He was succeeded by Ziwar Pasha who, on November 25, prorogued the Wafd-dominated Parliament. In many respects, Ziwar represented a return to rule by a sympathetic native elite that would represent, indirectly, Britain's interests. Allenby later reported that

His[Ziwar's] first public declaration was to the effect that he had become Prime Minister in order to save for Egypt what was left to be saved and to serve his Sovereign and his country in their hour of need. But in private he would express astonishment that we had not taken the occasion to annex Egypt and have done with it.³

Ziwar quickly attempted to build a coalition that would enable him to withstand Zaghlul's influence in the country. He gained the tacit support of Tharwat Pasha and on December 9, Ismail Sidqi Pasha, a leading member of the Liberal Constitutional Party, joined the government as Minister of the Interior. Ismail Sidqi, one of the original members of the Wafd that had called on Wingate, became one of the most powerful figures in the government and in later years was the virtual dictator of Egypt.

During the months that preceded the elections for a new Chamber of Deputies, administrative measures were taken by the government to assure success at the polls. Mudirs and sub-Mudirs were appointed or replaced with a view to obtaining sympathetic regional and local administrations. Concerned by the government's apparent success, Zaghlul made a number of indirect overtures to the Residency in order to affect a reconciliation.

The primary elections were held on February 4, 1925 and the results were

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1. Chamberlain to Allenby, February 21, 1925, Tel. No. 63, FO/371/10900.
 2. For an excellent account of the methods used to solve the crime, see the report prepared by Russell Pasha, Commandant of the Cairo City Police: Allenby to Chamberlain, March 1, 1925, Desp. No. 159, FO/371/10896.
 3. Allenby to Chamberlain, April 26, 1925, Desp. No. 303, FO/371/10887. Details of political developments in Egypt since the delivery of the ultimatum have been taken from this despatch.

generally seen to favour the government although there were doubts about the final outcome. The secondary elections were held on March 12 and the results seemed inconclusive. The Egyptian government and the Residency believed that the government had won 105 seats and that the Wafd had elected 101 Deputies, 15 of whom were ready to defect. The Wafd, on the other hand, claimed that they had won 115 seats.¹

Parliament opened on March 23. By this time the estimate of party strength was that the Chamber was divided between 90 government deputies, 90 Wafd deputies, with the rest undecided. The test was to be the election of the President of the Chamber. Tharwat Pasha was the government candidate and Zaghlul stood on behalf of the Wafd. The vote was secret and heavy pressure was applied to the wavering Deputies by both sides. Apparently the Wafd was more successful since Zaghlul was elected by a majority of approximately 40 votes. As a result of this resounding defeat, Ziwar tendered his government's resignation to the King on the grounds that the Chamber was hostile. He did this with the foreknowledge that 'The King will refuse to accept resignation and Parliament will be dissolved.'²

King Fuad, in due course, issued the decree of dissolution and new elections, as mandated by the Constitution, were set for May 23. Parliament was scheduled to meet on June 1. The government, however, did not intend to permit the elections to take place and instead planned to issue by Royal Decree a new electoral law based on the pre-war Belgian model. This would effectively delay elections and unpredictable parliamentary rule for many months enabling the Ziwar government to entrench itself in Egypt. Thus two years after the adoption of a Constitution, Allenby's great success, and a little more than a year after the election of Zaghlul, Egypt returned to rule by decree, by a government that obviously did not enjoy popular support and maintained itself through the support of the Palace and, more important, the good will of the Residency.

With the successful resolution of many outstanding issues, Allenby once again turned to his resignation tendered months earlier. Expecting a government victory in the forthcoming elections in March, Allenby wrote to Chamberlain on February 14 that 'If this expectation is justified [in March], the time of crisis

1. Allenby to Chamberlain, March 13, 1925, Tel. No. 108, FO/371/10887.

2. Allenby to Chamberlain, March 23, 1925, Tel. No. 126, FO/371/10887.

will soon have passed; and I trust that you will then decide that the necessity of retaining me in my present position no longer exists.'¹ However, at the end of February, before the final elections had taken place, reports began to appear in the press in England that Allenby had resigned.² Allenby immediately cabled London about enquiries made by the Morning Post and Reuters correspondents in Egypt and informed them that he would issue a denial. He intended to deny the resignation because of the commitment made on December 1 not to make this public until the crisis had passed and because elections would take place in less than two weeks' time. In addition, Allenby issued the denial

Because in a country like this from the moment that it is believed that His Majesty's representative is leaving he ceases to count and it is of high importance that my authority should not be impaired. The forces of order in Egypt at this moment are largely leaning on me.³

Despite the denial, the impact of the rumours and increasing attacks on Allenby by hostile British newspapers was soon felt in Egypt. On March 2, Ziwar, Sidqi and an emissary from the King visited Allenby and told him that 'Apart from generally unsettling effect they stated in particular that this attack combined with report of my resignation was playing, to a disturbing extent, into the hands [sic] Zaghouloulists...'⁴ Allenby shared their concern and believed that 'these attacks are harmful to our interests at the present moment and may indeed just make the difference between Zaghoul's defeat and victory.'⁵

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1. Allenby to Chamberlain, February 14, 1925, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/257.
 2. Reports of Allenby's resignation and/or their denial appeared in the Morning Post, February 27, 1925, Times, February 27, 1925, and Daily News, February 27, 1925.
 3. Allenby to Chamberlain, February 28, 1925, Private and Personal, Unnumbered, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/257. Willert of the Foreign Office Press Department, wrote to Selby that '...the problem we had to meet was a difficult one. To have said nothing mysteriously would have added fuel to the flames of rumour. It is always a fatal attitude to adopt. To have brushed aside all talk of resignation as absurd would have been misrepresentation of a sort in which it is impossible to indulge.' Willert to Selby, February 28, 1925, FO/371/10907. In the end, the Foreign Office did not issue its own denial, but instead referred the press to Allenby's statement. Chamberlain to Allenby, February 28, 1925, Private and Personal, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/257.
 4. Allenby to Chamberlain, March 3, 1925, Private and Personal, Unnumbered, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/257.
 5. Ibid.

The attacks on Allenby and his policy were mainly in the Beaverbrook and Rothermere papers and caused much anger in the Residency. Kerr wrote to Owen Tweedy that 'We are all disturbed and sad about the Beaverbrook-Rothermere attack on Lord A. which is doing damage here and if S.Z[aghlu] wins the elections he will very largely have to thank these two...'¹ The most serious attacks came from the Daily Mail. A series of highly critical articles by Ward Price, the paper's Egyptian correspondent, began shortly after Stack was murdered and was supported in the Daily Mail's editorials.² In view of the still unsettled situation in Egypt, the attacks in the press and rumours about Allenby's future, Chamberlain decided to suspend action on the announcement of Allenby's resignation.³

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1. Kerr to Tweedy, March 1, 1925, STAC, Tweedy Papers, Box 4. The reasons for the attacks in the press perhaps are found in an earlier visit to Egypt by Lords Rothermere and Beaverbrook: 'The visits to Egypt of Lords Rothermere & Beaverbrook have been remarkable in that neither of them have called here & neither in consequence was invited to the Residency. I have heard nothing which would indicate that Lord Rothermere considered himself aggrieved thereby but there is little doubt that Beaverbrook leaves Egypt with a feeling that he has not been treated with fitting consideration.' OMT[weedy], to Kerr, 20/3[1923], FO/141/792(16484).
 2. For example, see: Ward Price, 'Egypt. Government's Gravest Task,' and, editorial, 'The Test in Egypt Still to Come,' Daily Mail, December 9, 1924; Ward Price, 'Egypt in Trousers Too Soon,' Daily Mail, December 18, 1924; Ward Price, 'Sudan Mutiny Disclosures,' and, editorial, 'Egypt Trifling With Us,' Daily Mail, December 20, 1924. Gardner claimed that, in view of Lord Northcliffe's earlier support of Allenby in 1922, these attacks showed the 'fickleness of Lord Northcliffe, that Newspaper's proprietor.' Gardner, *op. cit.*, p. 249. However, Lord Northcliffe had died in August 1922 and Lord Rothermere, his brother, gained control of all the Northcliffe papers with the exception of the Times.
 3. Chamberlain to Allenby, March 4, 1925, Private and Personal, Unnumbered, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/257. There are indications that the rumours may have begun in Egypt. However, one possible explanation is that the rumours which recurred in April, may have been the result of the activities of Sir George Lloyd, later Lord Lloyd of Dolobran, Allenby's successor. Lloyd believed that Baldwin had promised him the position of High Commissioner in Egypt in 1923. In early 1925, after Allenby's resignation had become common knowledge in Conservative circles in London, Lloyd feared that he would not receive the office despite the fact that 'I have framed all my plans and guided all my actions on the assumption that there existed, as there indeed did exist, an honourable understanding in the matter.' Lloyd to Chamberlain, March 16, 1925, BUL, Chamberlain Papers, AC/18/1/38. As a result, he embarked on an embarrassing campaign of solicitation with senior members of the government. Word may have reached the press in this manner. In fact, Chamberlain had to write Lloyd: 'I beg you to hold your hand, to exercise patience, and to be prepared to accept with dignity whatever decision the Government may make.' Chamberlain to Lloyd, March 19, 1925, BUL, Chamberlain Papers, AC/18/1/39.

On May 2, Allenby finally felt that the time had come when his resignation could be safely submitted to the King:

The situation in Egypt is quiescent, under a Ministry which is favourably disposed towards His Majesty's Government and which, with the support of His Majesty's Government is likely to hold its own until the elections which will probably not take place before the winter. The murderers of the late Sirdar are laid by the heels and will certainly be convicted and hanged. Summer is coming on, and with the advent of the hot weather there is usually a lull in Egyptian political activity.¹

Allenby therefore suggested that a successor be appointed without delay and that he be permitted, before the appointment was announced, to assure the Egyptian leaders of the continuity of British policy. This letter crossed with a similar letter from Chamberlain informing Allenby that his resignation could be submitted and that Clark Kerr would, at the same time, be transferred and promoted.²

Even Allenby's last weeks were marred by misunderstanding. Despite his request that he receive prior information of the announcement of his successor, Reuters carried a news item about the appointment of Sir George Lloyd as the next High Commissioner on May 16.³ Allenby was assured that the announcement had been unauthorized and on May 18 he was informed that, subject to the King's approval, Chamberlain would inform the House of Commons on May 20 that

Lord Allenby informed me last autumn of his desire to be relieved as soon as the public interest made his retirement possible. I received the announcement of his intentions with great regret and at my request he has continued to hold the post of High Commissioner up till the present time.⁴

The announcement of Allenby's resignation was a compromise between Allenby's refusal to resign because of strain he did not feel and Chamberlain's desire, which Allenby shared, to prevent public discussion of the dispute between the two men lest it raise doubts about British policy in Egypt.

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1. Allenby to Chamberlain, May 2, 1925, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/257.
 2. Chamberlain, apparently, wished to give Allenby's successor a clear field upon taking office. Chamberlain to Allenby, April 30, 1925, Private and Personal, Chamberlain Papers, FO/800/257.
 3. Allenby queried this in an urgent cable to Chamberlain. Allenby to Chamberlain, May 16, 1925, Tel. No. 189, FO/371/10907.
 4. Chamberlain to Allenby, May 18, 1925, Tel. No. 126, FO/371/10907.

On June 11 Allenby wrote his final despatch describing the main features of developments in Egypt as he saw them on the eve of his departure. After six years as High Commissioner all he could write was

I do not see why, with prudence and a reasonable measure of good fortune, we should not be enabled to gather tangible fruits from six years of patience. I do not look at present for the conclusion of an agreement between Great Britain and Egypt, but I hope for a period of friendly co-operation.¹

Allenby's departure was described with evident warmth by Henderson who afterwards wrote that

On the day of Lord Allenby's departure from Cairo large and manifestly friendly crowds lined the streets. The scene at the station itself was impressive. The gathering there...was the most representative of its kind which has taken place within the memory of those present; and the many Egyptians of whom Lord and Lady Allenby have by their personal charm made close personal friends were ill able to conceal their emotion.²

But after six years, what had changed?

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1. Allenby to Chamberlain, June 11, 1925, Desp. No. 423, FO/371/10887.
 2. Henderson to Chamberlain, June 28, 1925, Desp. No. 474, FO/371/10907.

CONCLUSION

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'Renounce - or monopolize - or share': Salisbury's dilemma was still unresolved. Within that context, the aim of this study has been to understand the development of Britain's policy towards Egypt amidst the events and processes that occurred during the crucial years of 1922 to 1925 when a serious attempt was made to establish Anglo-Egyptian relations on a permanent basis. This was sought in three inter-related areas: in the perceptions and attitudes of the policy-makers; in the relations between the British establishment in Cairo and the British government in London; and, in the effects of the events of the period. Thus there has been an attempt to understand both the environment as well as the specific direction in which policy evolved.

The British both in London and in Cairo began with certain common perceptions about Egypt, Egyptians and the nature and necessity of maintaining Britain's vital interests in the area. Much of this intellectual baggage was the heritage of the nineteenth century and was rooted in the decades of Britain's rule of Egypt. After the First World War, however, these general attitudes and views were often translated into opposing approaches and policies that were determined to a great extent by the physical locale and specific concerns of the British policy-maker. Administrative stability, the maintenance of public order, and a cooperative native elite were the paramount concerns of the Briton in Cairo, concerns that coloured his general appreciation of policy towards Egypt. In London, however, policy was perceived within the broader framework of considerations such as general imperial policy, domestic politics, and public opinion. There was, therefore, wide scope for differences in approach, differences that were pursued vigorously throughout the period.

A schematic analysis of the events and developments indicates a division into two distinct periods. The first is 1922-1923, or 'Cairo's years', when policy can be seen to have been the pursuit of short-term goals. The second, 1924-1925, or 'London's years', saw the attempt to establish a long-term policy through which Anglo-Egyptian relations would be defined.

'Cairo's years' were marked by a revival of the influence of the British in Cairo in the area of policy formulation. They were also characterized by increasingly sharp divergence between Lord Allenby and the Residency in Cairo, and

Lord Curzon and the Foreign Office in London.

The initial reasons for Cairo's renewed importance were the circumstances surrounding Lord Allenby's appointment as High Commissioner in 1919, his position and authority in Egypt, and, then, the almost unanimous support he enjoyed amongst his staff and advisers. The inability of, first, Lord Curzon and the Foreign Office and, then, Lloyd George to impose an Egyptian policy on Allenby was due largely to a general pre-occupation after the war, the decline of the Foreign Office's position, and the political and imperial context in which the government in London functioned. The post-war economy, Ireland, India, the unstable coalition, all conspired to weaken the hand of the government in London when dealing with their representative in Egypt.

The strength of Allenby's position and the divergence over policy towards Egypt were apparent at the very start of 'Cairo's years' when the first major clash occurred after the breakdown of the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations of November 1921. The British government faced with concerns that went beyond Egypt, refused further concessions. Allenby and his staff, on the other hand, fearing their inability to maintain a viable administration in Egypt, pressed for the unilateral declaration of Egypt's independence. The conflict that followed and Allenby's dramatic victory proved that these indeed were 'Cairo's years'.

The next eighteen months and the objectives of policy bore the marks of Allenby's stunning victory. Independence dictated the direction of policy towards Egypt: disengagement from Egypt's internal administration; the enactment of a constitution and the Act of Indemnity; and, the end of martial law. All this was done in such a way so as to permit the growth of a moderate Egyptian elite that would relieve Allenby and the Residency of the burden of administration and the fear of disorder. Throughout this period, when serious disagreement arose, Allenby's position was usually sufficient to carry the day. The personalities of Lloyd George's successors, Bonar Law and Stanley Baldwin, further strengthened Allenby and the Residency.

Allenby's success, however, was the inevitable prelude to his decline in influence, just as his forceful personality, a major factor in his victory in 1922, was the cause of his defeat and departure in 1924-1925. The achievement of the short-term goals that followed Egypt's nominal independence made the Residency's retreat from a central role in Egyptian affairs unavoidable and the

subsequent depletion of the British establishment in Egypt inevitable. The nature of the Residency's involvement in Egypt's political life was transformed from that of an active participant to a buffer between the Throne and the nationalists. Furthermore, the focus of policy moved to the need to define a permanent Anglo-Egyptian relationship. All this, together with the election of a strong Labour Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, Ramsay MacDonald, followed by the equally forceful Conservative Foreign Secretary, Austen Chamberlain, led to London's unquestioned supremacy in its relationship with the High Commissioner. The clearest indication of this was the peripheral role played by the Residency during the 1924 negotiations between MacDonald and Zaghlul.

After MacDonald's departure from the Foreign Office and the appointment of Chamberlain, there was one last clash, precipitated by Allenby's harsh ultimatum of November 1924. Allenby again adopted the same forceful approach he had used when pursuing a conciliatory policy in earlier years. Although Allenby's ultimatum was eventually accepted by Egypt and was never repudiated by London, Austen Chamberlain and the members of the Foreign Office, long resentful of the High Commissioner's position, exacted a high price for this final gesture of independence. The approach that had succeeded so well in Allenby's differences with Lloyd George in 1922 was not effective with Chamberlain in 1924. The conflict was no longer between equals. Allenby's resignation should be viewed within the context of the conflict between the government in London and the Residency in Cairo even though it came as a result of the appointment of Nevile Henderson to the Residency staff and not because of his disregard of instructions from London.

The question raised by Allenby's last despatch must again be asked: Indeed, what had changed? British post-war policy towards Egypt, particularly from 1922 to 1925, was marked by irony. This period was apparently one of great change and yet in the end, the irony was that little had actually changed. All areas were affected: policy perceptions and debates; the implementation of policy; Egypt's administration; and, the balance of power between the British in Cairo and in London.

Perhaps one of the most significant ironies was that of the basic perceptions and ensuing debates over policy. The activities of the Milner Mission to

Egypt in 1919 and 1920 gave rise to intense discussion in Britain about the future of policy towards Egypt. Approaches, such as conservative 'Cromerism' or 'Neo-Cromerism' and 'Milnerism', perceived perhaps mistakenly as a liberal policy, were at the heart of the policy debates. The discussions, however, appeared to come to a sharp close in February 1922 with the unilateral declaration of Egypt's independence.

Yet, less than three years later, the debate over policy was renewed, its language and idiom essentially unaltered. Its occasion was the question of the Sirdarship of the Egyptian Army, but it went beyond the immediate issue, revealing the deep feelings that still existed barely concealed beneath the surface. Winston Churchill, who never accepted what he believed to be the loss of Egypt, renewed the discussions at the end of 1924. His position, unchanged by the experiences of the recent past, was that 'So far from agreeing that "Cromerism" is impossible, I regard it as inevitable.'¹

The strongest opposition to a revival of 'Cromerism' came from Austen Chamberlain and members of the Foreign Office who sought 'to concentrate attention on the reasons for which a return to "Cromerism" is not now possible.'² Responding in Cabinet to Churchill's advocacy to just such a reversion, Chamberlain argued that this was '"Cromerism" with a vengeance and carried to a point which even in the heyday of his authority would, I think, have been repudiated by Lord Cromer.'³ Instead, he argued, 'my policy is to avoid annexation - not to govern Egypt, but to leave the Egyptians to govern it whilst securing sufficient power to protect those interests of which we are guardians.'⁴

Although Chamberlain was supported by most of his colleagues on the specific issue of an Egyptian Sirdar, the debate of 1919-1920 was still unresolved in 1925. Before Allenby's departure from Egypt, Murray wrote unofficially to Henderson, with the knowledge and direction of Chamberlain and Crowe, that it was probably correct 'that the stable equilibrium [in Egyptian affairs] can only be

1. W.S.C[hurchill], Egypt, Note by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, December 30, 1924, C.P. 555(24), CAB/24/169, p. 1.
2. AC[hamberlain], January 9, 1925, Minute to J. Murray, Draft Memorandum, January 7, 1925, FO/371/10889.
3. AC[hamberlain], Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on Egypt, January 9, 1925, C.P. 20(25), CAB/24/171, p.1.
4. Ibid.

obtained immediately in clearing out altogether or annexing Egypt, and that both these courses are altogether outside the sphere of practical politics.'¹

The second irony was in the implementation of policy. The period began in the shadow of the failure of negotiations between Britain and Egypt in 1921. This was followed by the resignation of the Egyptian Prime Minister, Adli Pasha, on the one hand, and the sharp British Note of December 3, on the other. In the midst of this stalemate, Allenby demanded and received approval for a policy of unilateral independence. Anglo-Egyptians relations were organized unilaterally in the hope that Tharwat Pasha, as the next Prime Minister, would be amenable to a resolution of the four reserved points.

Allenby's final months in Egypt were marked, in a similar fashion, by the failure of the MacDonald-Zaghlul negotiations, the Stack assassination and Zaghlul's resignation. Once again Anglo-Egyptian relations were established by fiat - Allenby's ultimatum. It was hoped, yet again, that the consequences of this unilateral act would be dealt with by another moderate Egyptian, Ziwar Pasha, who would be amenable to agreement on some of the issues outstanding between Britain and Egypt.

A corollary to the unilateral structuring of relations was the nature of Egypt's internal administration. From 1883 until 1914 Egypt was controlled by British officials supported by British bayonets. The 'veiled protectorate' was based on the premise that Britain would rule Egypt through a cooperative native elite. The formal protectorate further entrenched this principle. In 1921 and 1922 Allenby was concerned that this system was no longer viable and advocated the unilateral declaration of Egypt's independence. One of the first consequences was the immediate and dramatic withdrawal of Britain from Egypt's administration.

At the end of the period, Allenby, the author of the policy of Egyptianization, was largely responsible for its reversal through the ultimatum of November 1924. The general implication of this action was that, if it did not signal a reversion to the formal protectorate, it moved in the direction of a 'veiled protectorate'. Zaghlul, Ziwar or whoever succeeded as Prime Minister, would have to abide by the will of the Residency, supported by British officials in the Egyptian administration, in all matters of importance.

1. Murray to Henderson, Private, June 16, 1925, FO/371/10889.

The final irony was the shifting balance of power between the Residency in Cairo and the government in London. Lord Allenby was appointed Special High Commissioner to Egypt because Sir Reginald Wingate was thought too weak to control events in that country. In fact, Allenby was believed by some to be 'too fierce' even for riot-torn Egypt. Allenby's early actions indicated that he indeed possessed the firmness necessary to impose his will. He imposed that will most clearly, however, when he forced the government in London to adopt a policy of conciliation that went beyond anything hitherto contemplated. Allenby and the British in Cairo had become a major force in the formulation of policy towards Egypt.

By the end of 1924, Allenby was no longer central to this process and he stood at the head of a weakened official and unofficial establishment. Thus, Allenby, at first 'too fierce' for Egypt and then too conciliatory for London, was compelled by the excesses of native violence and the pressures of resurgent nationalism to adopt a policy of harsh retribution. Allenby, the firm conciliator, was replaced because resentful British officials in London feared what they believed was his weakness and vacillation and opposed what they perceived was his unnecessary harshness.

Perhaps the greatest irony of all was the fact that Allenby, responsible for Egypt's nominal independence, was now also responsible for creating conditions that permitted his successor, the imperialist Lord Lloyd, to re-establish a degree of British control over Egypt's affairs unknown since the 'palmy days' of Lord Cromer.

The final question that remains to be asked: Given British interests and Egyptian aspirations, could it have been otherwise?

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